

B-3706

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in How to Complete National Register Forms
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

116

1. Name

historic Chamber of Commerce Building

and or common Chamber of Commerce Building

2. Location

street & number 17 Commerce Street N/A not for publication

city, town Baltimore N/A vicinity of congressional district Third

state Maryland code 24 county independent city code 510

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name RGBV Associates, Edmund B. Vinson

street & number 7000 Security Boulevard, Suite 316

city, town Baltimore N/A vicinity of state Maryland 21207

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Baltimore City Courthouse

street & number North Calvert Street

city, town Baltimore state Maryland 21202

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Maryland Historical Trust
Historic Sites Survey

has this property been determined eligible? ☒ yes ☐ no

date 1982 ☐ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records Maryland Historical Trust, 21 State Circle

city, town Annapolis state Maryland 21401

7. Description

B-3706

Condition		Check one	Check one
excellent	_____ deteriorated	_____ unaltered	X. original site
X good	_____ ruins	X altered	_____ moved date _____
fair	_____ unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

DESCRIPTION SUMMARY

The Chamber of Commerce Building is a 1904-1905 Renaissance Revival red brick building five floors in height. It has a low-pitched roof which is supported by steel trusses but largely hidden from view by a heavily corniced parapet. The building is eleven bays in its long (north-south) dimension and three bays wide. The east and west facades are mirror images of each other with an entrance in the third bay from the north. The south facade is symmetrical with an entrance in the center bay similar to those on the east and west. The north facade is similar to the south facade but with no entrance. The building totally occupies the site which slopes gently to the south and east. The interiors of the building are organized along a central corridor about twelve feet wide and running north-south from the elevators at the north end of the building. Each office has a masonry walk-in vault and cherry office doors with large transoms on the corridor. The original plaster coffered ceilings throughout the building have been partially covered by suspended ceilings. The fourth floor, the trading floor, has an ornate wooden entrance facing the elevator lobby. The fifth floor, a partial floor, was formerly a mezzanine over the trading floor. It contains an open light-well in the floor directly below an ornate skylight in the ceiling. The railings around the light-well and stairwells are of ornate cast-iron with wooden cap rails.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Chamber of Commerce Building is a neo-Renaissance brick bearing-wall building five floors in height. It has a low-pitched roof which is supported by steel trusses but largely hidden from view by a heavily corniced parapet. The building is eleven bays in its long (north-south) dimension and three bays wide. The east and west facades are mirror images of each other, with an entrance in the third bay from the north. The south facade is symmetrical, with an entrance in the center bay similar to those on the east and west. The north (alley) facade is similar to the south facade, but with no entrance. The building totally occupies its site, which slopes gently to the south and east. Basement windows, once opened into areaways on the east and west. These are now covered by public sidewalk and the windows sealed. The brick superstructure is bedded on a granite base which meets the sidewalk. Above the base, the first and second floors are rusticated by the indentation of every eighth brick course. Windows on these floors are double-hung, with terra-cotta flat arched lintels with projecting keystones. Above the second story is an egg-and-dart terra-cotta string course, defining the three upper stories. These stories are tied together with high arched windows with terra-cotta spandrels at the fourth floor, and by fluted terra-cotta pilasters between the windows, which are doubled where they meet the projecting end bays at all four corners. The end bays, which project almost a foot, are somewhat wider than the typical bays. They are quioned at each return with terra-cotta quoins. The pilasters on each facade support an architrave above the arched windows, with a frieze and a dentiled cornice. The frieze contains a terra-cotta shield in each end bay. The entrance doors are recessed in a vestibule, which

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Continuation sheet Chamber of Commerce Building
Baltimore City, Maryland Item number 7 Page 1

GENERAL DESCRIPTION (Continued)

opens under a heavy lintel supported at each side by a pilaster and a free-standing terra-cotta column, both of which are fluted and banded. All columns and pilasters are of the Ionic order. There are also basement entrances on the east and west sides in the second bay from the south end. These also enter through vestibules, the openings of which are supported by terra-cotta brackets.

The interiors of the building are organized along a central corridor, about twelve feet wide, running north-south from the elevators which are located at the north end of the building. Each office has a masonry walk-in vault and cherry office doors with large transoms on the corridor. The original plaster coffered ceilings throughout the building have been partially covered by suspended ceilings. The fourth floor, originally the trading floor, has an ornate wooden entrance facing the elevator lobby. The fifth floor, which is a partial floor, was formerly a mezzanine over the trading floor. It contains an open light-well in the floor, directly below an ornate skylight in the ceiling above. The railings around the light-well and stairwells are of ornate cast iron with wooden cap rails.

8. Significance

B-3706

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1904-1905 Builder Architect Charles E. Cassell, arch.

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph) Applicable Criteria: A, C

SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

The significance of the Chamber of Commerce Building derives from its architectural character and its historic role in Baltimore history. As a structure designed in the Renaissance Revival manner, the building displays certain distinctive features, primarily decorative, that were commonly employed during the rebuilding of the financial area in Baltimore following the Great Fire in 1904. These features include rustication; quoining; dentil, egg-and-dart, and modillion cornices; and pilasters. Certain points, however, separate the Chamber of Commerce Building from the other structures in the district. These points include a horizontal quality as opposed to the verticality that generally marks the area and being primarily a red brick structure in an area dominated by stone. Significance is also derived from association with the city's commercial history. The building was constructed as a grain trading center with a trading room on the upper floor and offices for traders and exporters below. For many years during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Baltimore was the nation's leading exporter of flour and cereal grains. It's deepwater port at the railhead of the Pennsylvania, Western Maryland and B & O lines gave it a natural preeminence. During that period, before the era of modern communication, the focal point of the flow of trade was the exchange floor of the Baltimore Chamber of Commerce. This building is the second grain trading center to occupy this site. The first one was erected in the 1820s and is said to have been similar in design to the present structure. Following the 1904 fire, the association elected to continue in the same location and employed Charles Cassell of Baltimore to prepare drawings for the new building. Construction was begun in the summer of 1904.

HISTORY AND SUPPORT

For many years during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Baltimore was the nation's leading exporter of flour and cereal grains. Its deepwater port at the railhead of the Pennsylvania, Western Maryland and B & O lines gave it a natural preeminence. During that period, before the era of modern communication, the focal point of the flow of trade was the exchange floor of the Baltimore Chamber of Commerce.

The Chamber began its evolution in 1846 as a loosely organized group of merchants who met daily on Bowley's Wharf in order to standardize corn and grain prices. Previously, most of the grain trading in Baltimore, which was basically a local market, was transacted in the counting rooms of the various merchants. But in that year, famine in Ireland created a large export market and caused prices to fluctuate wildly.

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Chamber of Commerce Building

Continuation sheet Baltimore City, Maryland Item number 8 Page 2

HISTORY AND SUPPORT (Continued)

The Bowley's Wharf traders met in the open air, displaying grain samples on barrel heads and window ledges. On a cold day in February, 1853, a general meeting proposed the formation of a regular exchange. By the following week, one hundred thirty-seven merchants had subscribed. The group acquired two buildings at 77 and 79 South Street. Sub-letting the upper floors, they combined the first floors of both buildings into a hall which became the Baltimore Corn and Flour Exchange.

The organization survived opposition in the Maryland General Assembly, many of whose members saw the cartel as detrimental to the interests of local farmers. In April, 1855, the Superior Court of Baltimore granted a formal charter, allowing the Exchange to hold capital up to \$50,000. At this time, there were already 350 members.

The exchange quickly outgrew its makeshift quarters, and was so successful that by May, 1860, it had moved into its own building. This was the new Grafflin Building on South Street between Pratt Street and Bowley's Wharf. Virtually on the docks, the windows of the new Exchange afforded a perfect view of cargo operations in the port.

In 1872, the B & O Railroad constructed the City's first grain elevator, which had a capacity of half a million bushels, and business continued to boom. Ten years later, the Exchange had again outgrown its building, and a new location, a piece of property "bound by 2nd Street, Post Office Avenue, Holliday Street, and an Avenue recently cut through", was purchased. Many of the old members protested against this site, which was visually isolated from the harbor. The objections were overcome, however, and the new building of granite, brick and iron opened its doors on November 22, 1882. This building, like the present building, had a huge exchange floor, the "Great Hall" at the fourth floor.

In 1896 the Corn and Flour Exchange changed its name to the Baltimore Chamber of Commerce. Grain trading continued as its principal activity, but a maritime information service was added. It was hoped, at the time, that other trade associations would join, but this did not take place. Thus, the title, Chamber of Commerce is something of a misnomer. The Baltimore Association of Commerce, formed in 1924 by the merger of the Merchants and Manufacturers Association with the Board of Trade of Baltimore and the Export and Import Board of Trade, is the organization which fulfills the traditional role of a Chamber of Commerce. The similarity of the names of the two organizations still causes considerable confusion.

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Chamber of Commerce Building

Continuation sheet Baltimore City, Maryland Item number 8 Page 3

HISTORY AND SUPPORT (Continued)

The Great Baltimore Fire of 1904 destroyed the above ground portion of the 1882 Chamber Building, along with most of downtown Baltimore. Only the foundations and the heavy masonry security vaults survived the fire, together with all the contents of the vaults. Firemen, scaling the walls with ladders, opened the safes and brought the valuables down intact. The masonry vaults and 1882 foundations were preserved in the design for the new building.

The day after the Great Fire was extinguished, the Chamber of Commerce reopened for business in temporary quarters in the Masonic Building. This was viewed by the business community as a tremendous vote of confidence in the renewal of the City.

Charles Cassell, a prominent local architect, was chosen to supervise the reconstruction of the Chamber Building at the same location. As rebuilt, the Chamber had a two-story trading hall on the fourth floor, three main entrances at street level, and two basement entrances. The south end of the basement was designed as a rathskeller for business lunches. The north end houses the building's mechanical and electrical services, including two water-powered hydraulic elevators, still in operation today. They are the only remaining water-powered elevators in Baltimore.

The first, second and third floors of the building housed offices of the various grain merchants and shipping companies. The communicating offices were lit by huge windows, extending to the ceiling. The entire building, except for the roof structure, is of fireproof construction, with steel structural members encased in concrete.

On the fourth floor, the Exchange's executive offices opened onto the vast Trading Hall. Running half its length on one side was a row of telegraph offices and telephone booths. Above these, on the balcony, was the big blackboard on which Chicago and Liverpool grain market prices were chalked by two men following a ticker-tape. On the other side of the hall were long rows of high, square polished wood tables. Each of these was the trading post of one of the member merchants. On the tables, in numbered bags, were samples of the wheat, rye, oats and barley stored in the City's grain elevators. In one corner of the hall stood a weather map, vital in predicting market fluctuations. Another corner, railed off from the main floor, was used as a newspaper reading room. Across the front of the room were enclosed booths, each with its own telegraph office, for the larger grain firms.

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Chamber of Commerce Building

Continuation sheet Baltimore City, Maryland

Item number

8

Page 4

HISTORY AND SUPPORT (Continued)

The staff of the Chamber kept the board up-to-date on all grain shipments into and out of Baltimore. All incoming shipments were inspected at the grain elevators and warehouses, and samples were sent to the exchange floor in small paper bags. Prices were set three times daily; the morning call at 10:45 was taken shortly after opening bids were received from the Chicago grain exchange. The noon call fixed the day's "settling price", and the last call at 2:15, set the closing quotation. Each call was preceded by the tone of a gong at the rostrum.

Up through the 1930s, the trading floor would be packed daily with bankers, railroad and steamship men, as well as grain dealers. But by the 1950s, the trading hall had become a cavernous, empty space, with two elderly gentlemen still writing the day's quotations on the big board. Several influences had combined to end the era of the municipal grain exchange. The first was the advent of the telephone. Instant communication alleviated the need to trade in person. Another influence was the creation in 1929 of the Federal Farm Board, which siphoned business out of private hands. The Federal Government quickly became the nation's largest grain trader. A third reason for Baltimore's decline as a grain trading port was government regulation of railroad rates, which favored other ports such as Norfolk and Boston.

The Great Hall was leased to a publishing firm, which partitioned and inserted a false ceiling, obscuring the upper part of the exchange floor. The room is still basically intact, with arched windows and coffered plaster ceilings above the contemporary 2' X 4' suspended ceiling. The freight elevator, near the south end of the building was abandoned and the shaft converted into janitor's closets. Many of the first, second and third floor offices were also "modernized" by the addition of a hung ceiling. The building today is largely occupied by small shipping companies and freight forwarders, many of whom still do business related to the grain trade.

9. Major Bibliographical References

B-3706

Maryland Historical Trust Historic Sites Inventory: Baltimore City
Files of the Baltimore Commission for Historic and Architectural Preservation
City Hall, Baltimore, Maryland

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Baltimore East, Maryland

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A

1	8
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3	6	1	1	6	0
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4	3	4	9	8	7	0
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Zone Easting Northing

B

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Zone Easting Northing

C

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Verbal boundary description and justification

The property is the city lot on which it stands and is bounded by Water Street on the south, Commerce Street and Custom House Avenue on the west and east respectively, and an alley on the north.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Marc Schabb

organization Myers and D'Aleo, Inc.

date March 1982

street & number 108 Water Street

telephone (301) 752-7848

city or town Baltimore

state Maryland

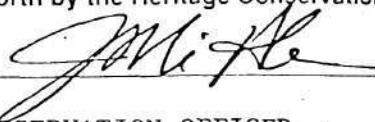
12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

☐ national ☐ state ☒ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature



12-17-82

title STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER

date

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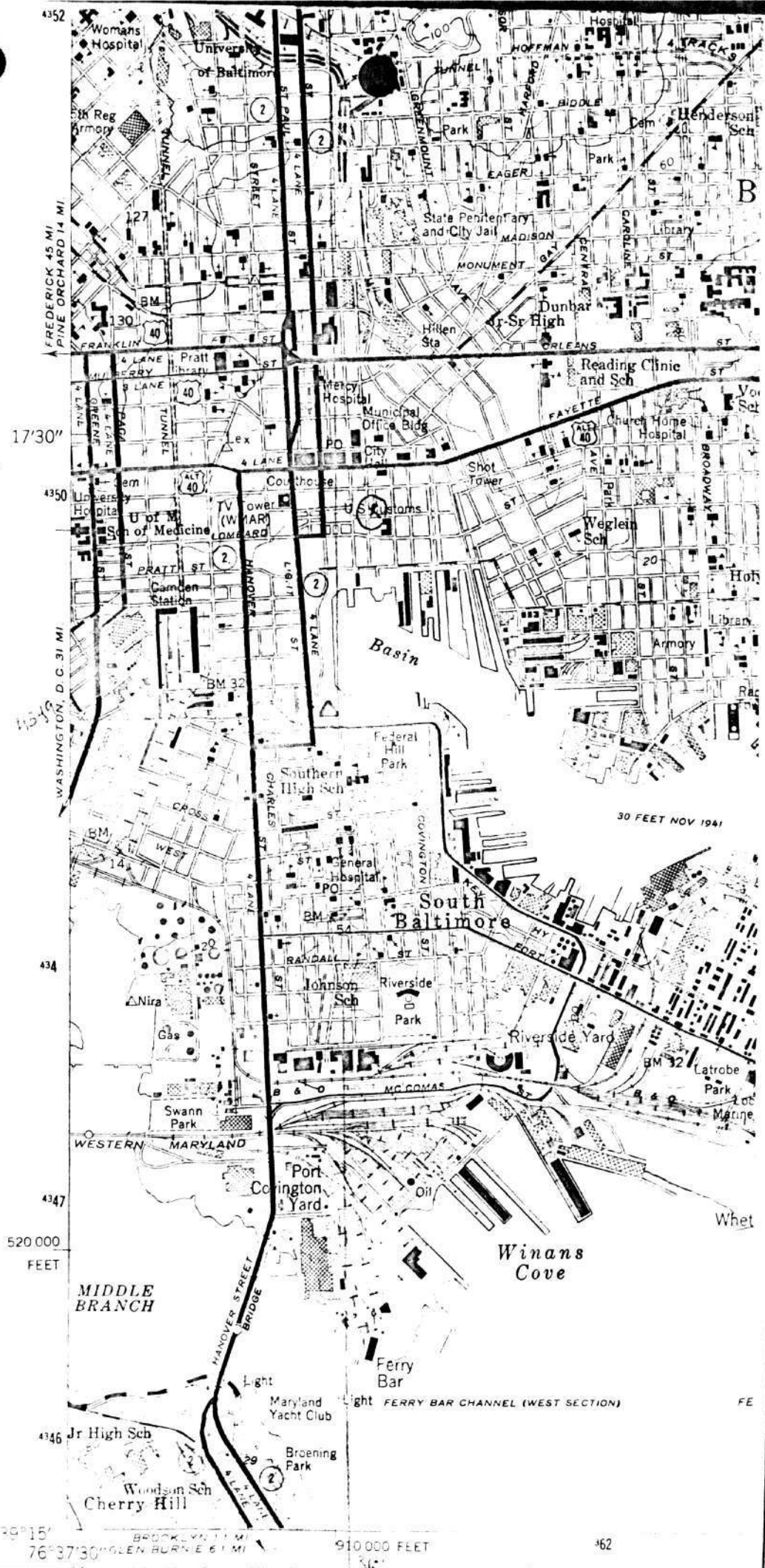
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

date

A 18/361160/4349870





B-3706

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
BUILDING

Baltimore East
Quadrangle

39°15' 76°37'30" GLEN BURNIE 6.1 MI
910 000 FEET

Mapped by the Army Map Service

B-3706



Chamber of Commerce Building
Baltimore, Maryland
Photo and neg: Janis Rettaliata
1702 Edmondson Ave., Balt.

January 1982
View from southwest

1/30

3 - Chamber of Commerce -
view from southwest.

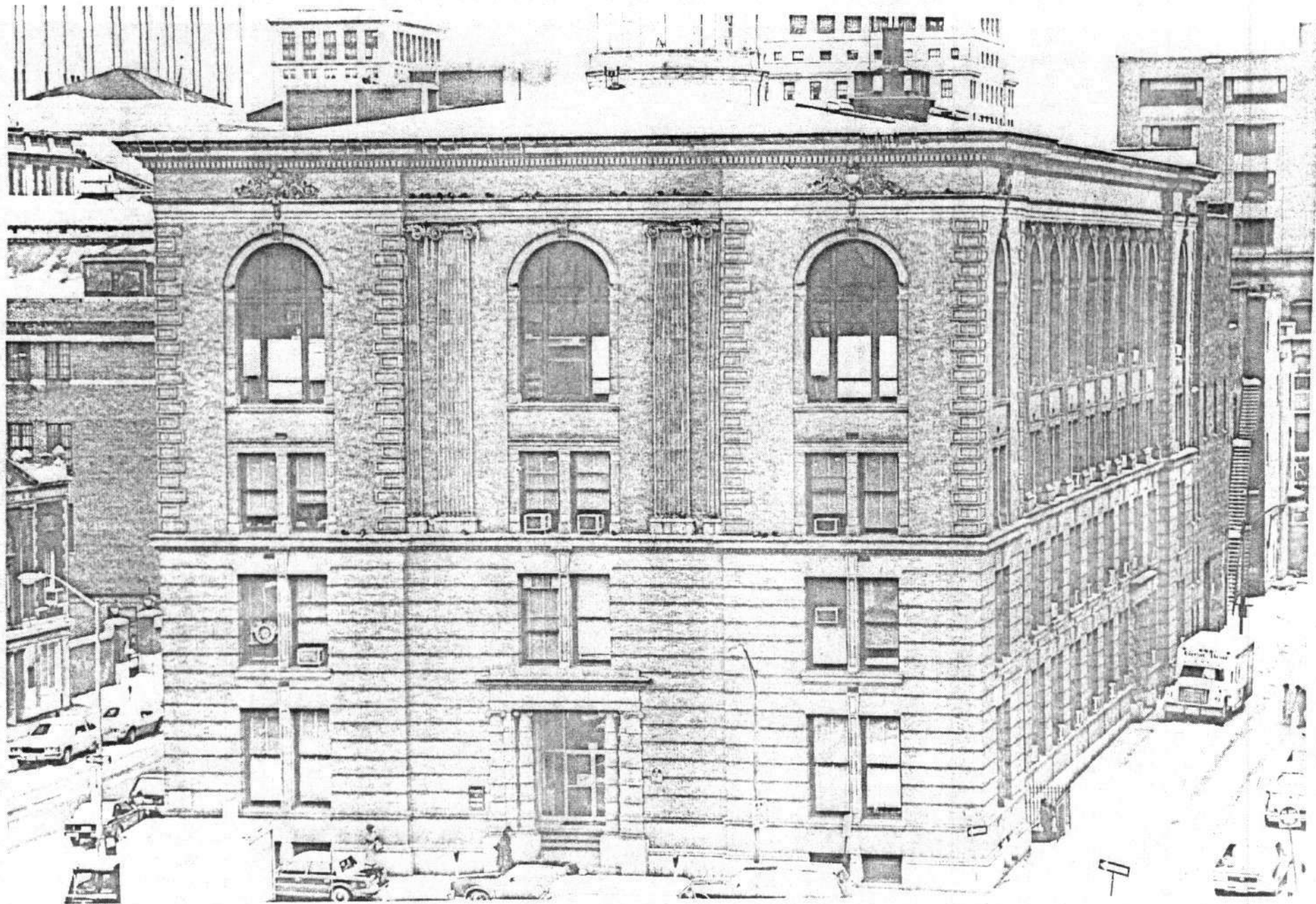
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Baltimore, MD 21228
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Jan 1982
17 Commerce St
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Chamber of Commerce Building
Baltimore, Maryland

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January 1982
Aerial view from south

2/30

17 - Chamber of Commerce -
aerial view from south

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January 1982
Aerial view from south

3/30

18 - Chamber of Commerce -
aerial view from south

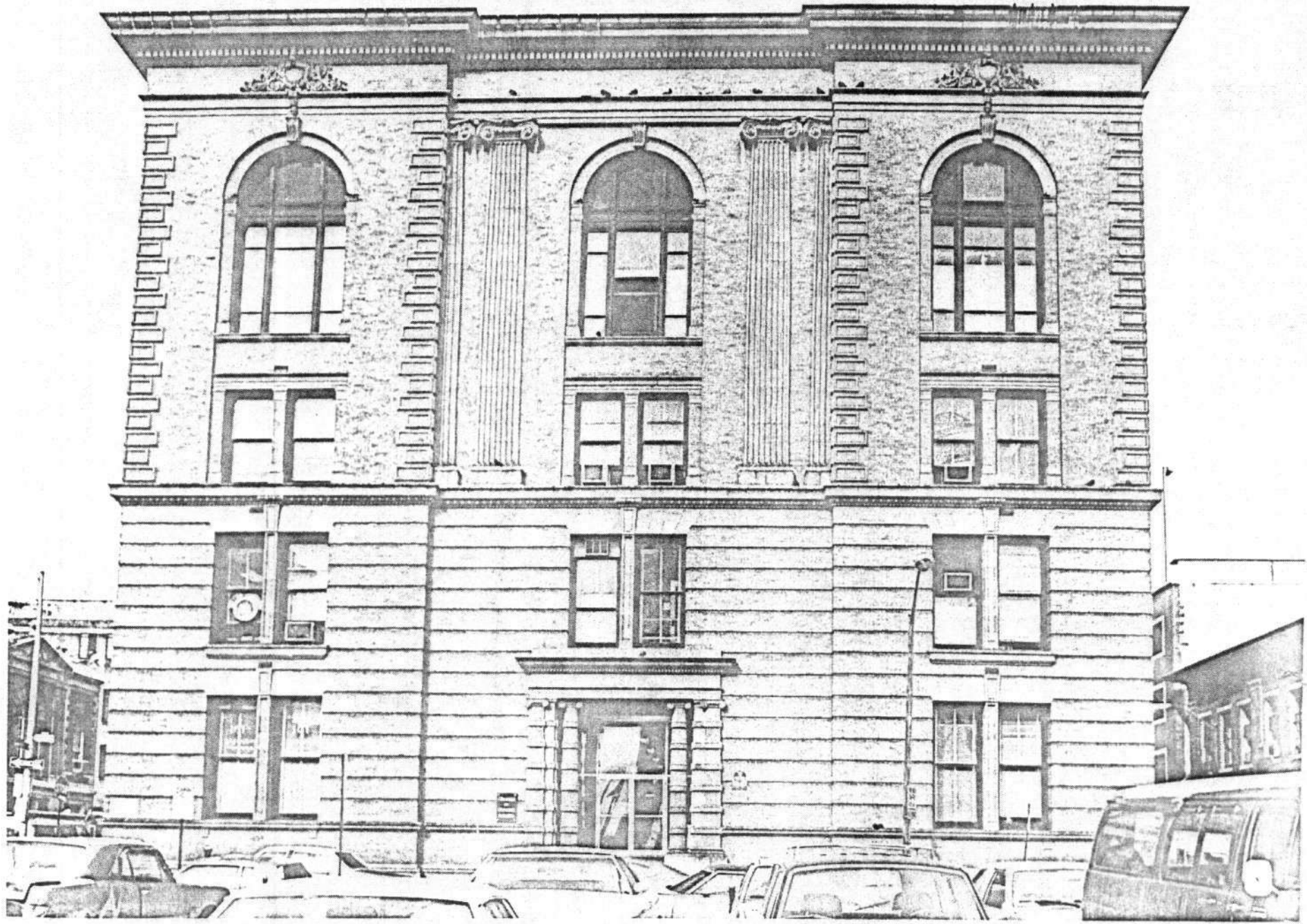
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Chamber of Commerce Building
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January 1982
South facade

4/30

4 - Chamber of Commerce -
south facade.

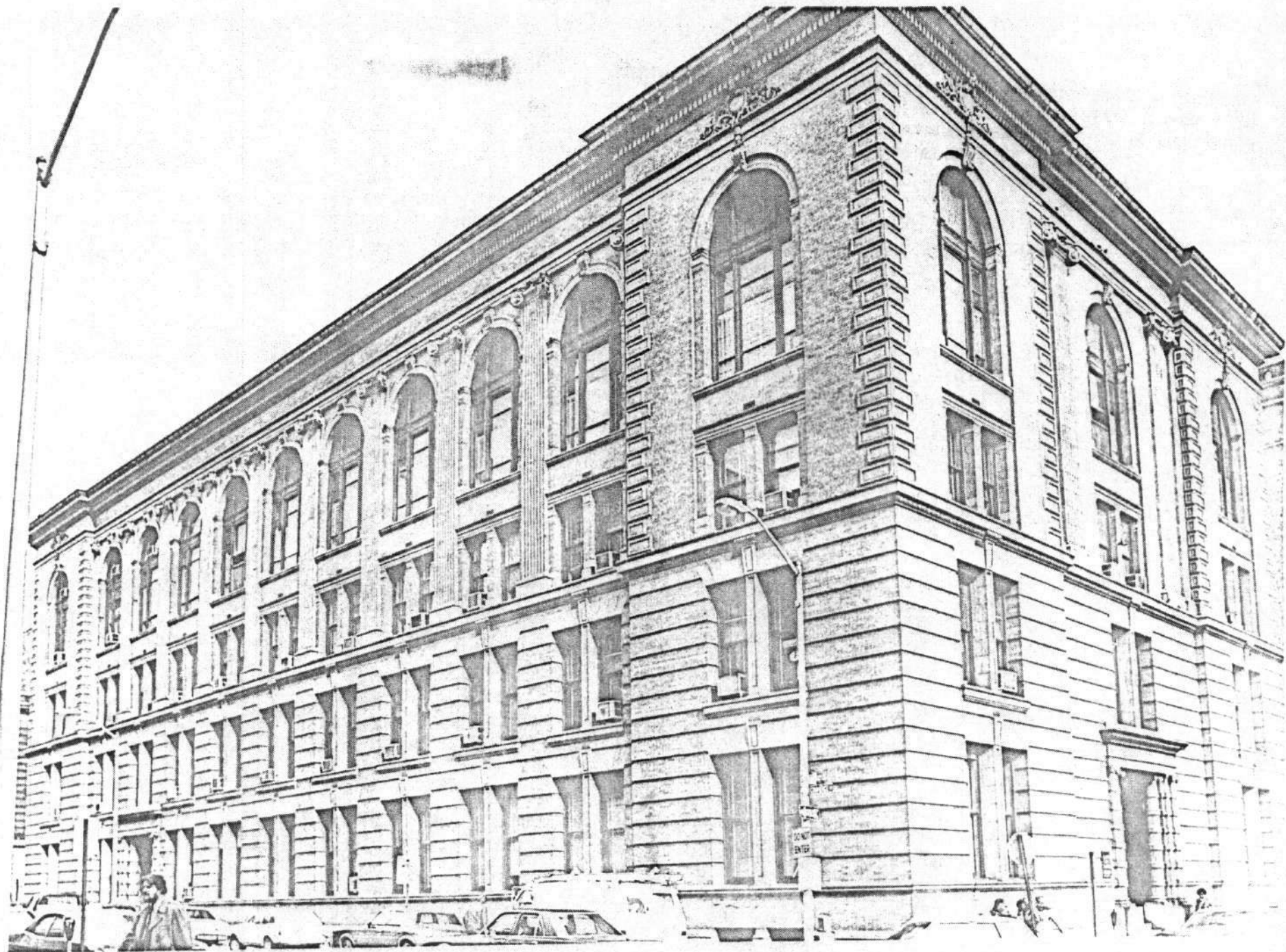
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January 1982
View from southwest

5/30

2 - Chamber of Commerce -
view from southwest.

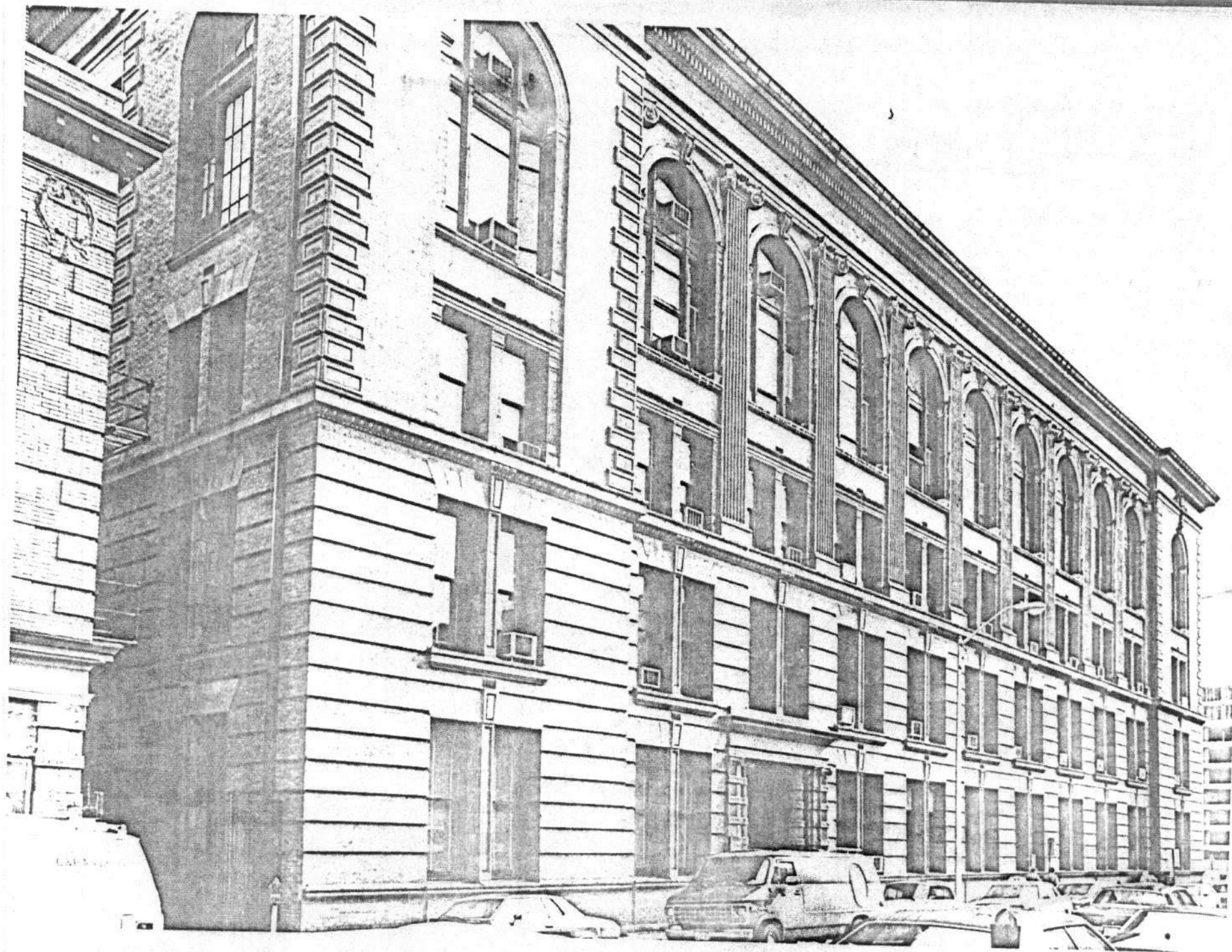
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January 1982
View from northwest

6/30

1- Chamber of Commerce -
view from northwest.

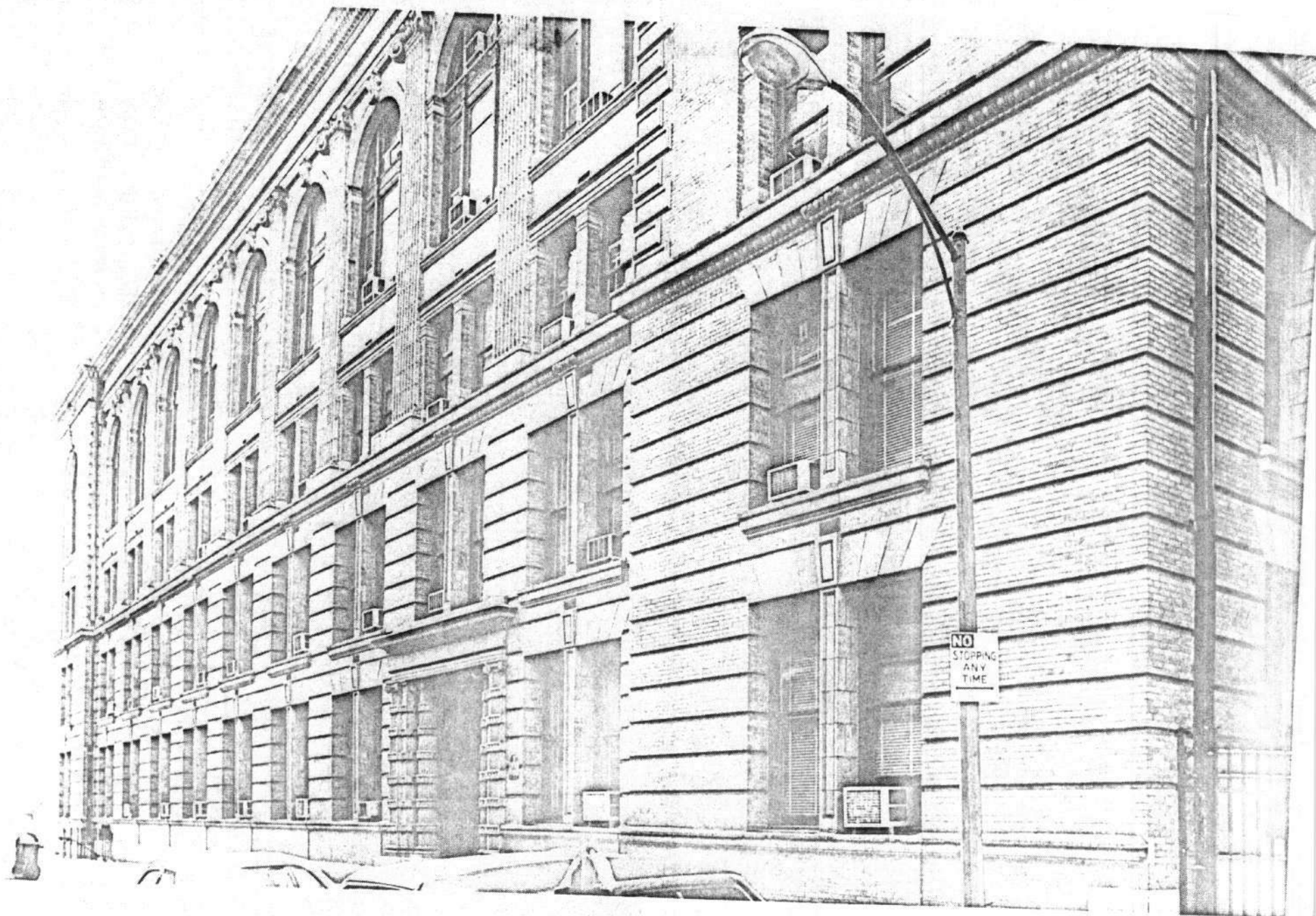
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Chamber of Commerce Building
Baltimore, Maryland

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January 1982
View from northeast

7/30

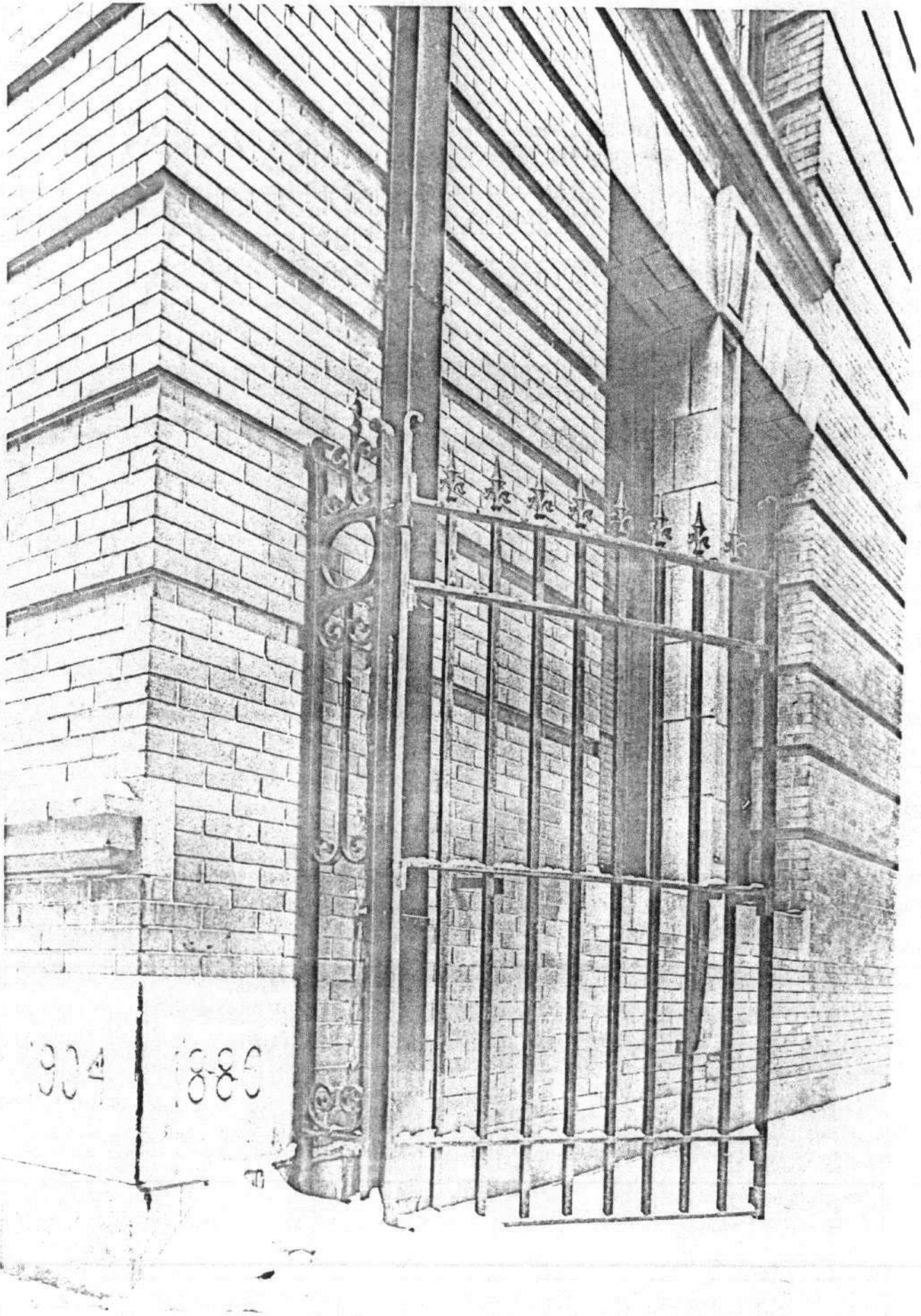
5 - Chamber of Commerce -
view from northeast.

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Chamber of Commerce Building
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1702 Edmondston Ave., Balt.
January 1982
Northeast corner, alley gate
8/30

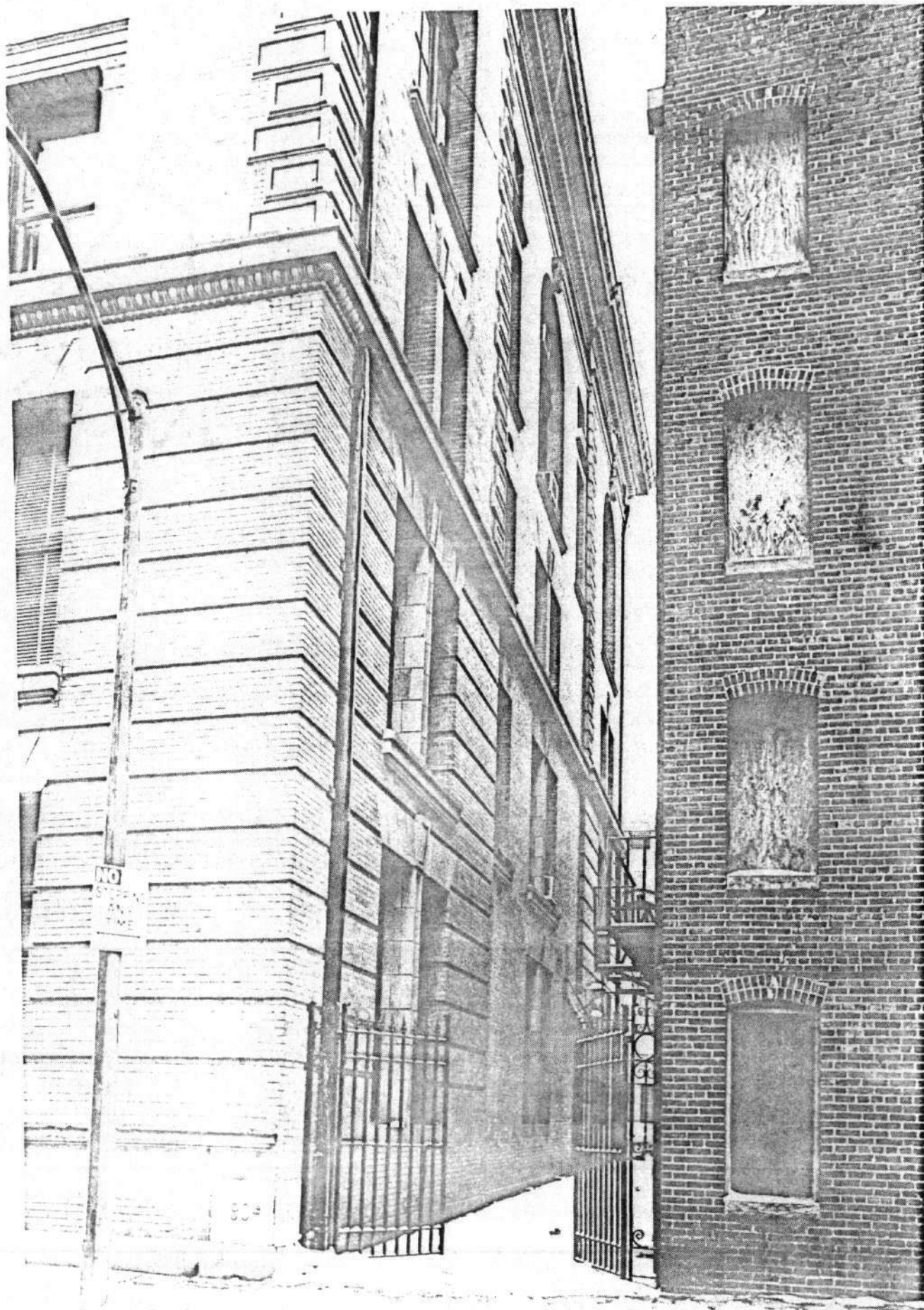
X - Chamber of Commerce -
northeast corner, alley
gate.

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Chamber of Commerce Building
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1702 Edmondston Ave., Balt.

January 1982
Alley from east

9/30

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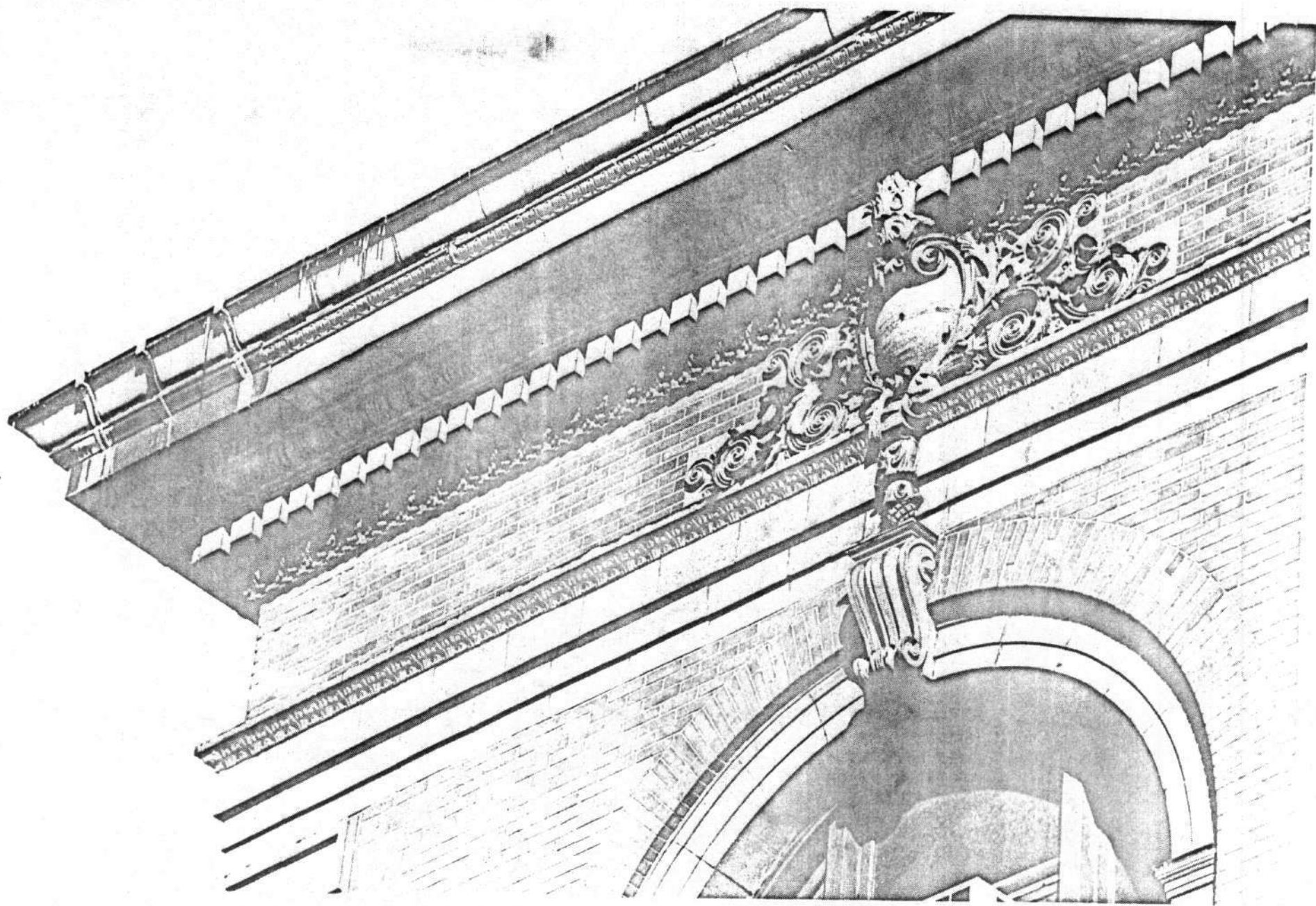
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X - Chamber of Commerce -
alley from east.

B-3706

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Chamber of Commerce Building
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January 1982
Cornice and gutter detail
10/30

8 - Chamber of Commerce -
cornice and gutter
detail.

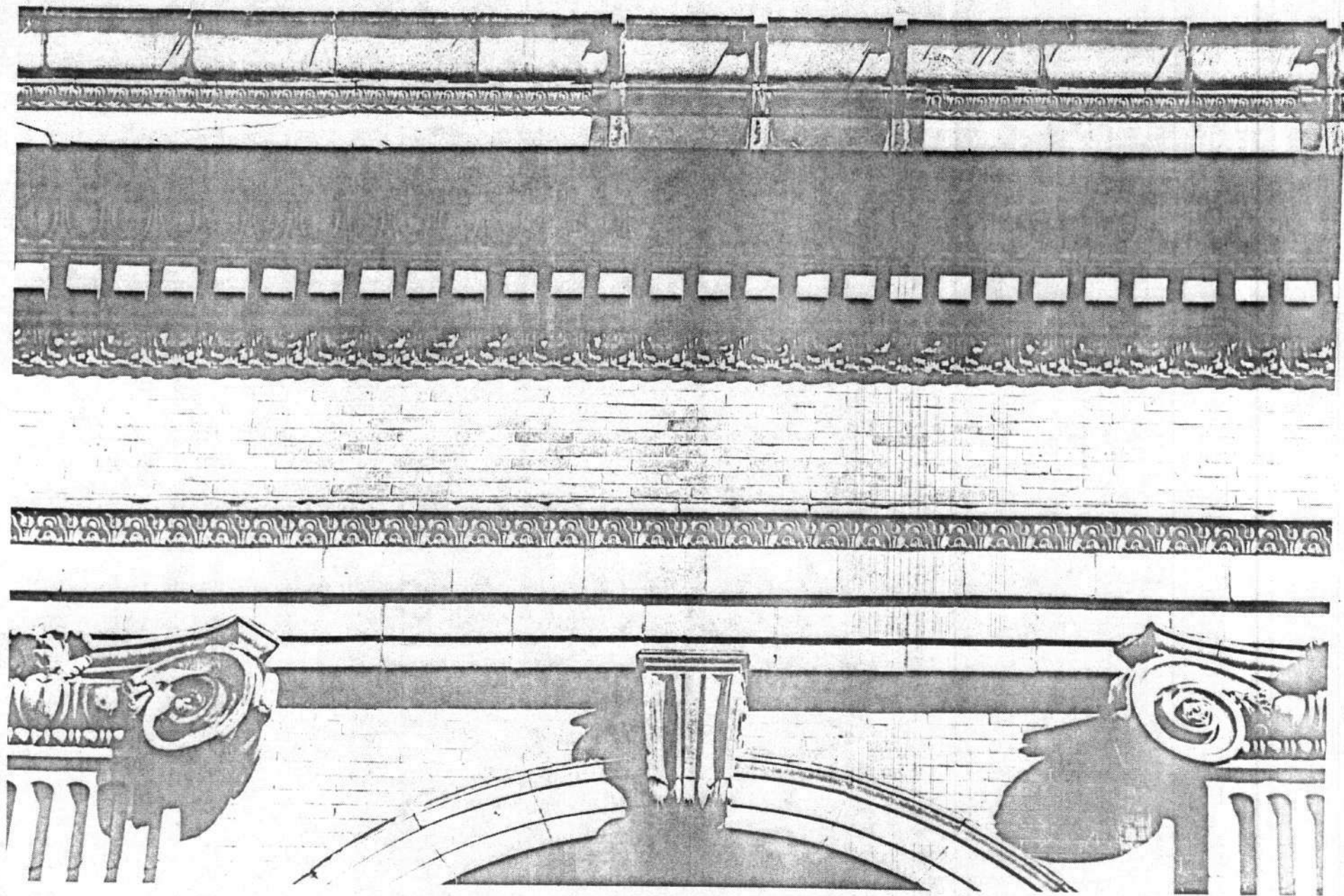
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Chamber of Commerce Building

Baltimore, Maryland

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1702 Edmondston, Ave., Balt.

January 1982

Keystone at typical bays

11/30

9 - Chamber of Commerce -
Keystone at typical
bays.

c02fr07a

Jan 1982

17 Commerce St

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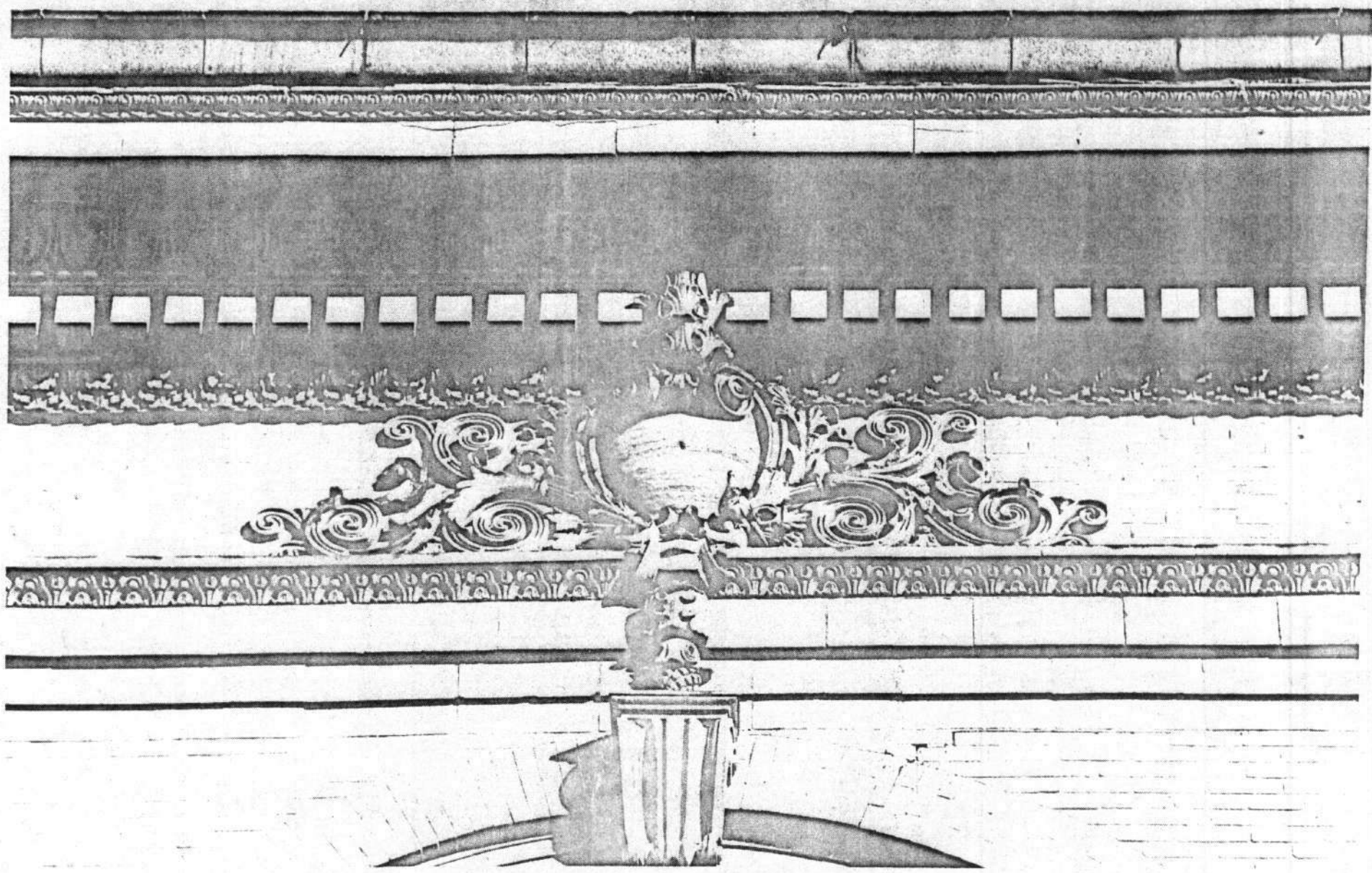
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Chamber of Commerce Building
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January 1982
Keystone at end bays
12/30

1b - Chamber of Commerce -
keystone at end bays.

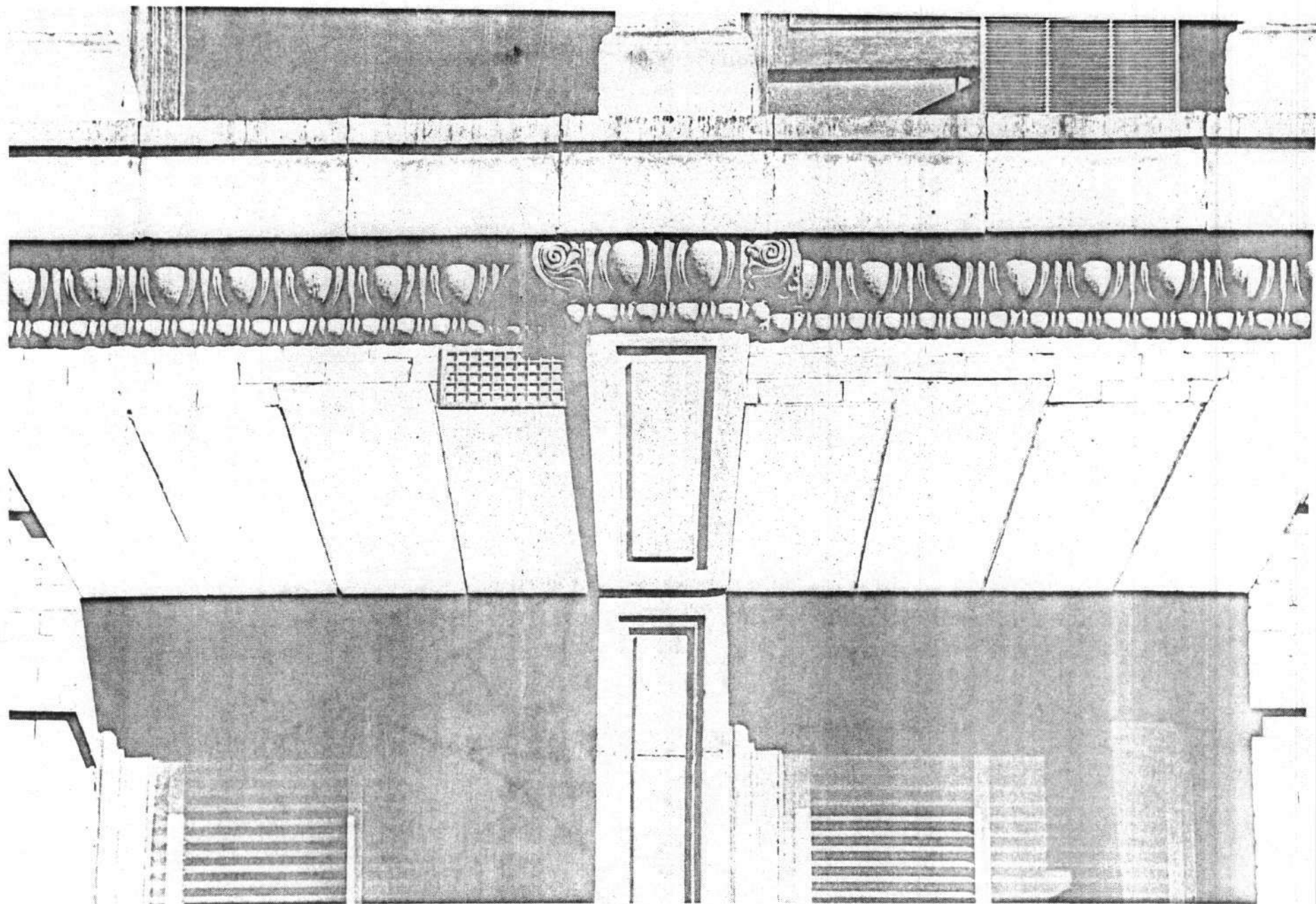
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301 - 744-8614

Jan 1982
17 Commerce St
c02frl3a

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Chamber of Commerce Building
Baltimore, Maryland

Photo and neg: Janis Rettaliata

1702 Edmondston Ave., Balt.

January 1982

Lintel at second floor

13/30

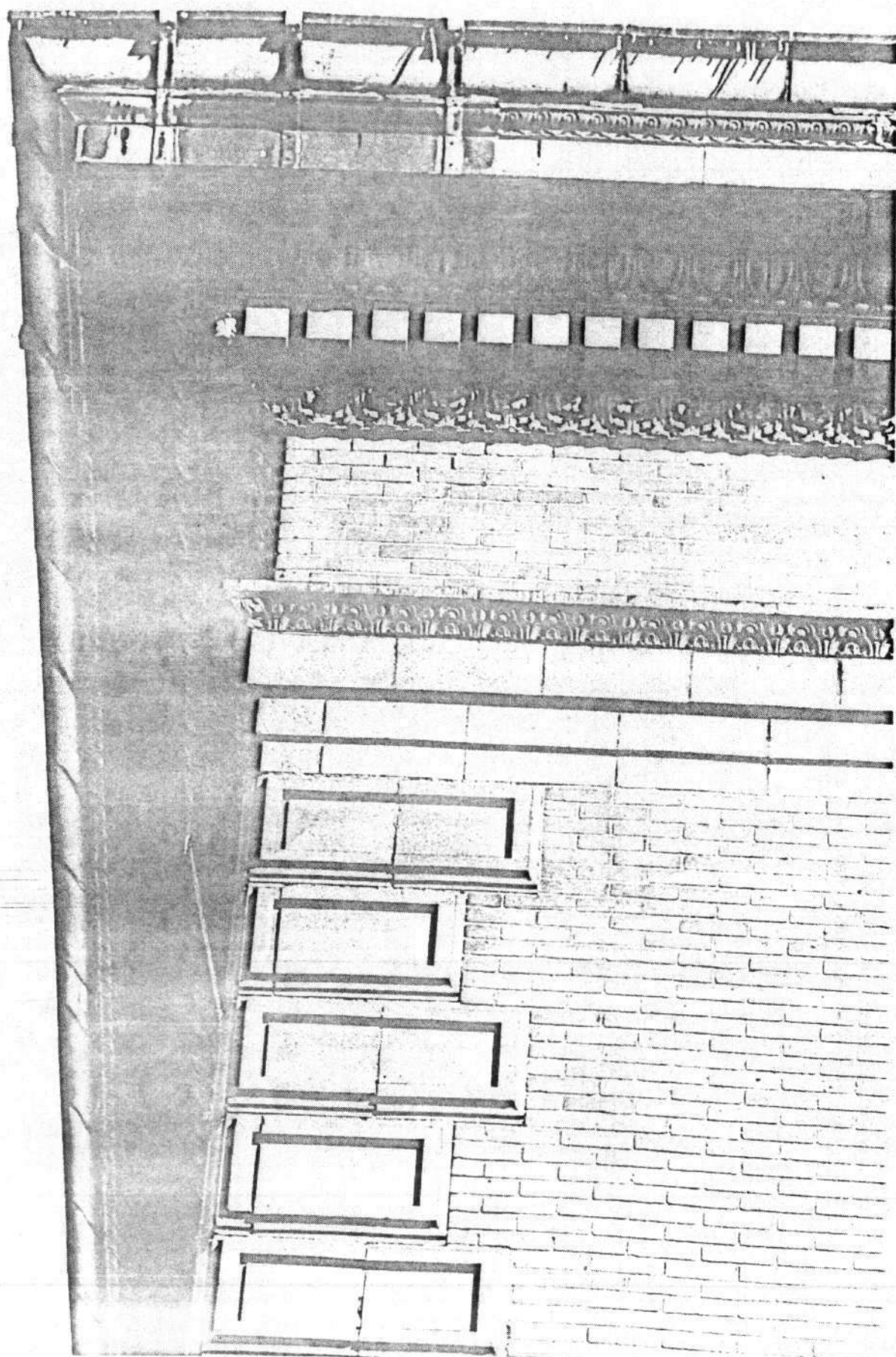
12 - Chamber of Commerce -
Lintel at second floor

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Chamber of Commerce Building
Baltimore, Maryland

Photo and neg: Janis Rettaliata
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January 1982
Quoins at corner

14/30

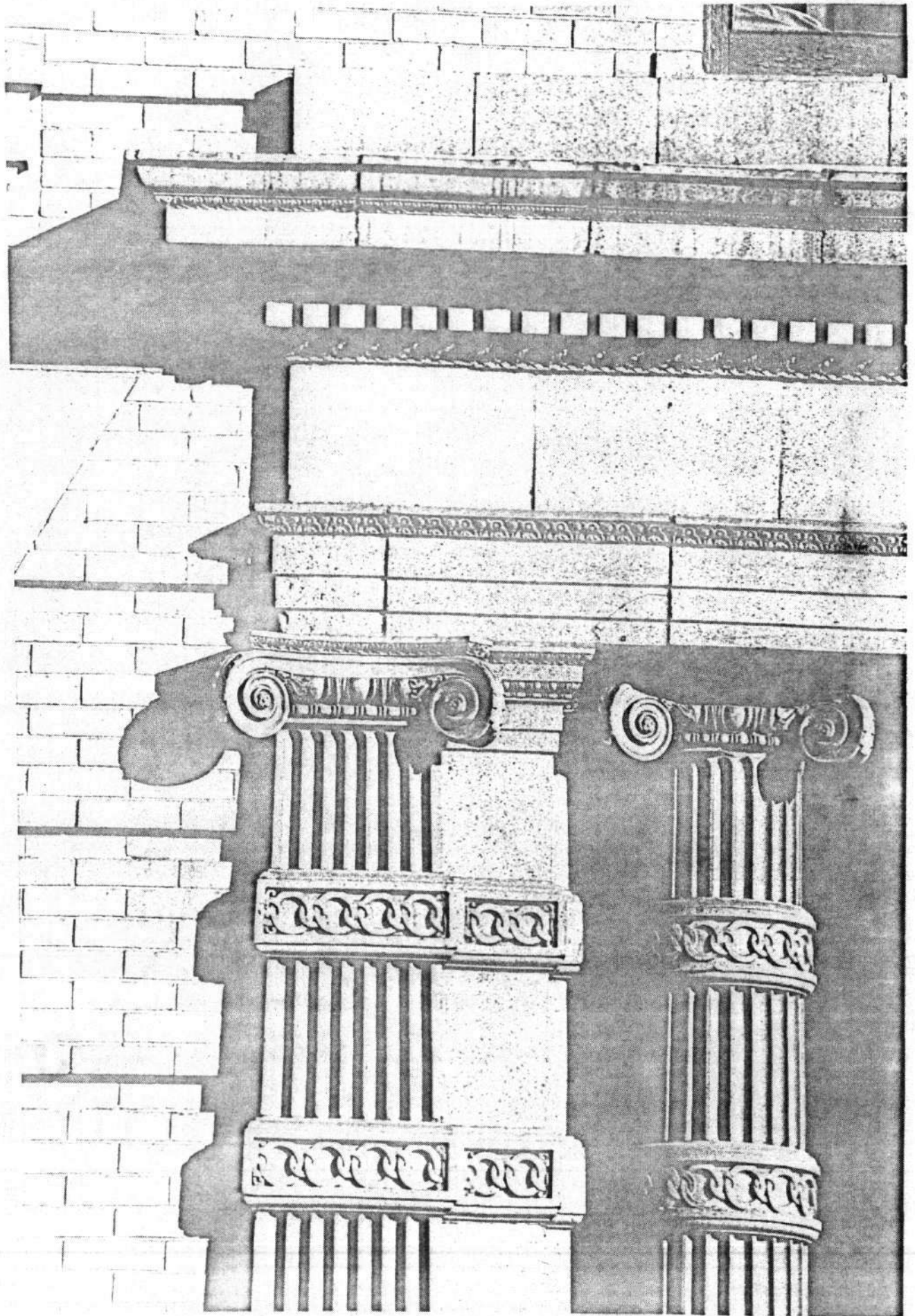
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13 - Chamber of Commerce -
quoins at corner.

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PA - Chamber of Commerce -
detail at entrance

Chamber of Commerce Building

Baltimore, Maryland

Photo and neg: Janis Rettaliata

1702 Edmondston Ave., Balt.

January 1982

Detail at entrance

15/30

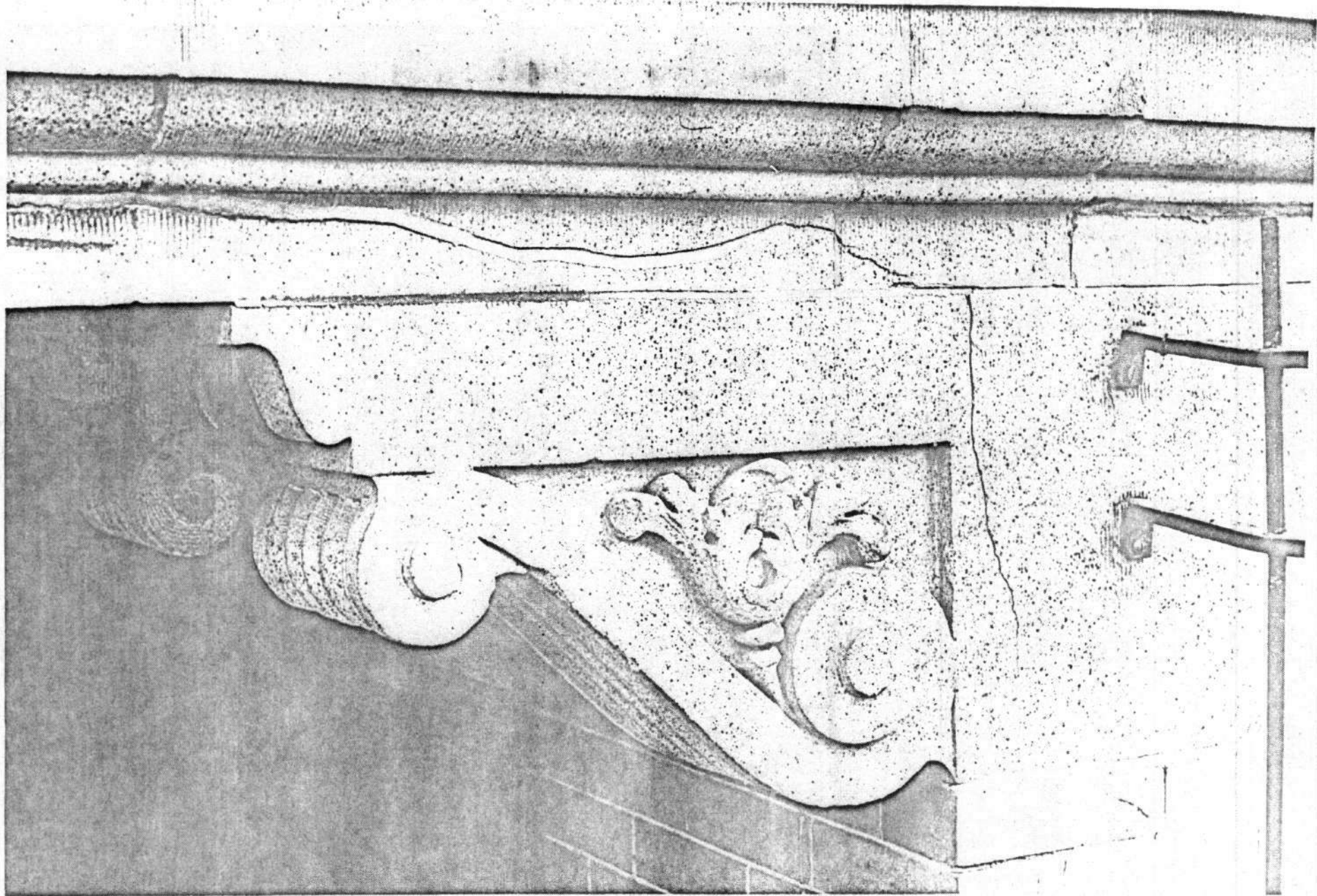
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Chamber of Commerce Building
Baltimore, Maryland

Photo and neg: Janis Rettaliata
1702 Edmondston Ave., Balt.

January 1982
Bracket at basement entrance

16/30

16 - Chamber of Commerce -
bracket at basement entrance

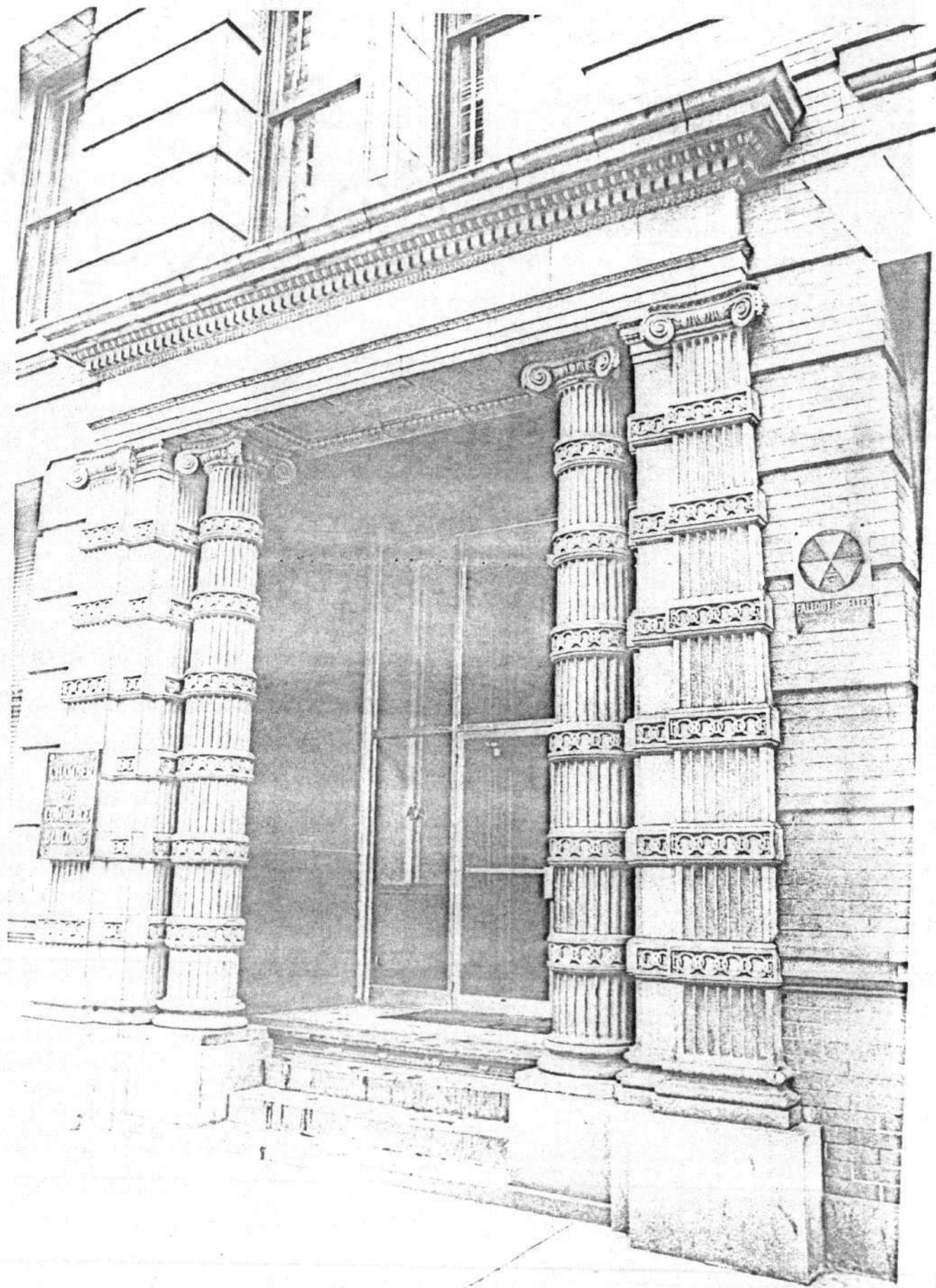
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19 - Chamber of Commerce -
entrance

Chamber of Commerce Building

Baltimore, Maryland

Photo and neg: Janis Rettaliata

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January 1982

Entrance

17/30

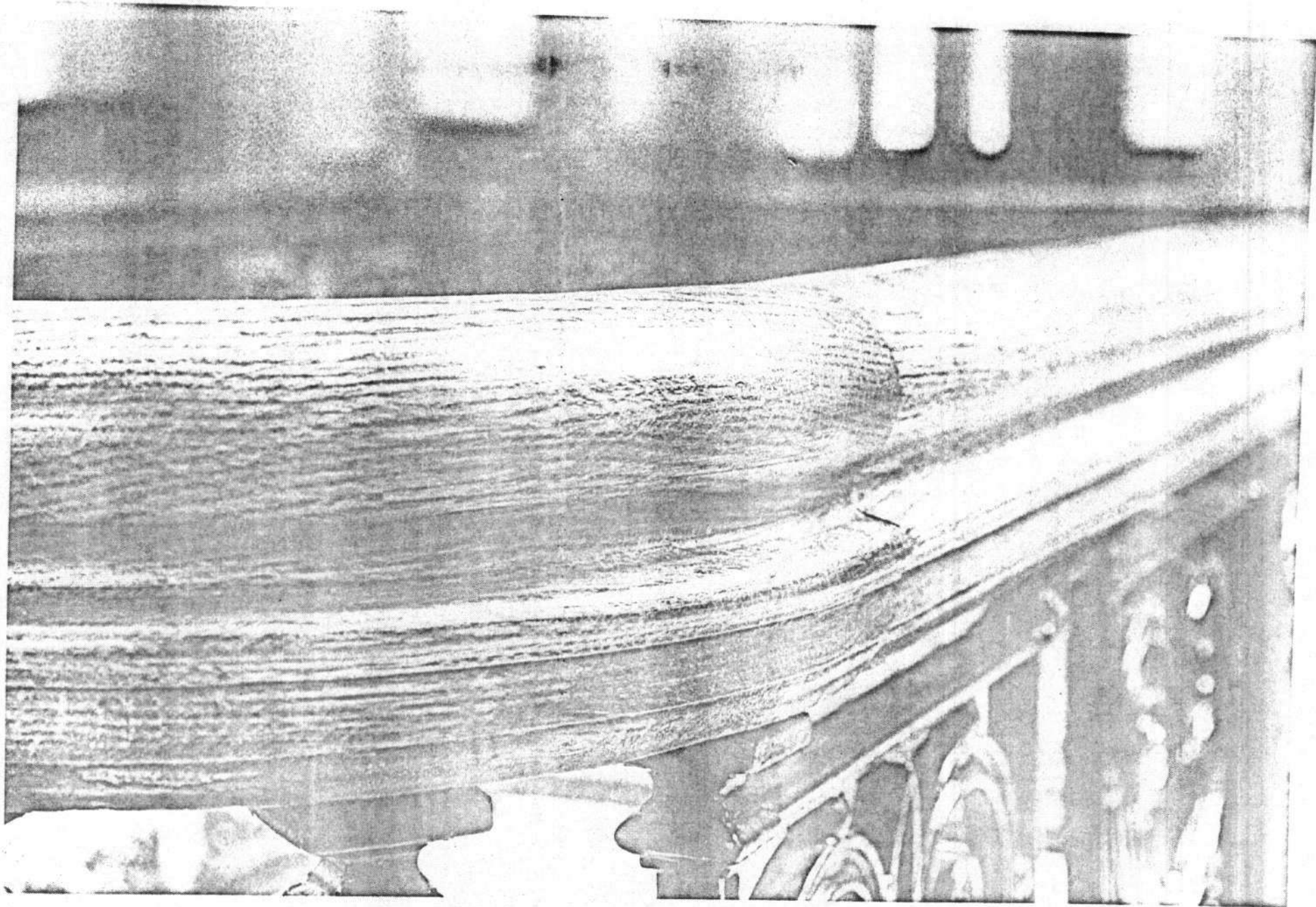
32
merce St
3a

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Chamber of Commerce Building
Baltimore, Maryland

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January 1982

Rail detail at fifth floor light-well

18/30

2A - Chamber of Commerce -
rail detail at fifth floor
light-well.

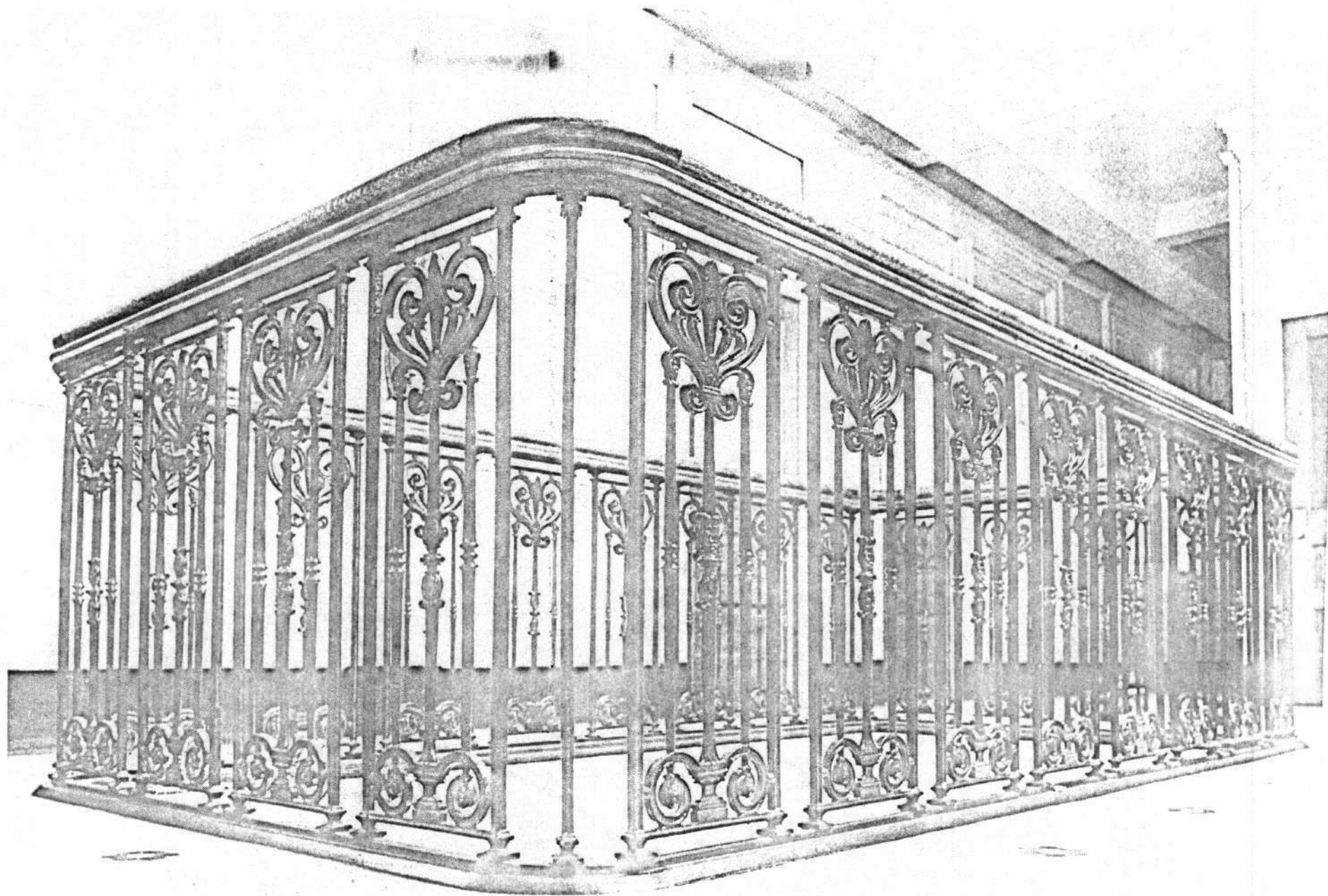
Jan 1982
17 Commerce St
c04fr04a

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Chamber of Commerce Building
Baltimore, Maryland

Photo and neg: Janis Rettaliata
1702 Edmondston Ave., Balt.

January 1982

Railing at fifth floor light-well

19/30

24 - Chamber of Commerce -
railing at fifth floor
light-well.

Jan 1982
17 Commerce St

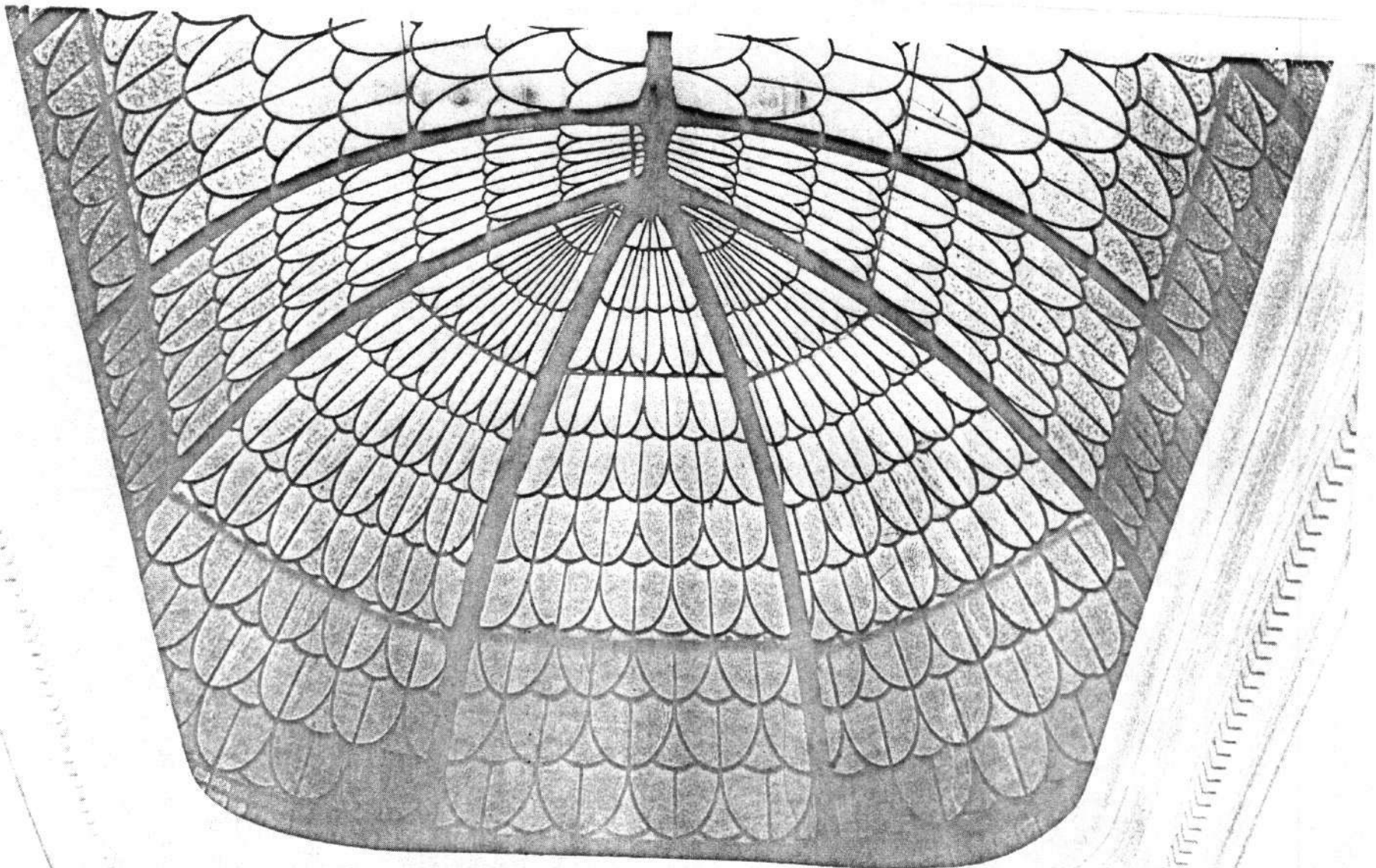
c04fr09a

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Chamber of Commerce Building
Baltimore, Maryland

Photo and neg: Janis Rettaliata
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January 1982

Skylight above fifth floor light-well

20/30

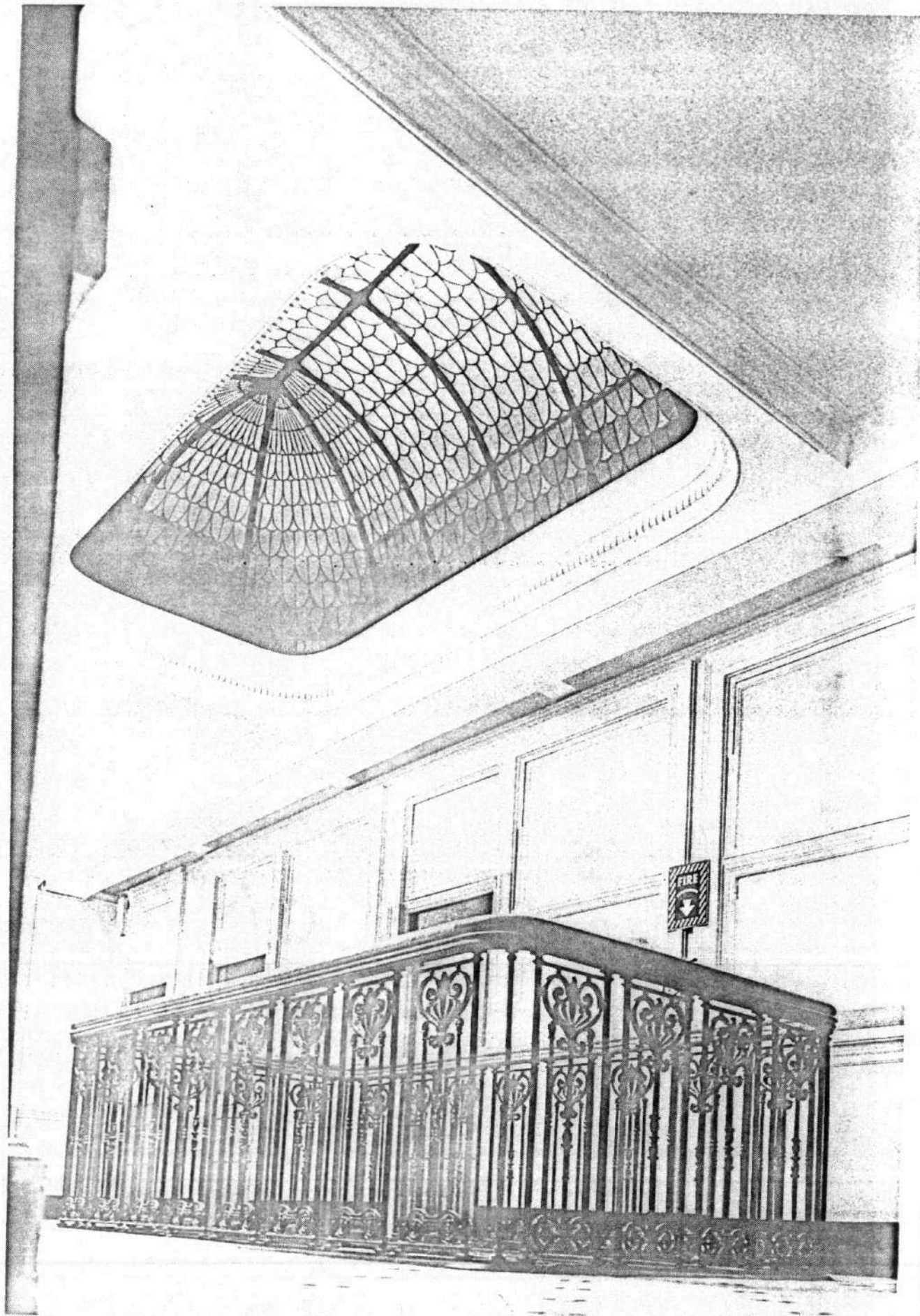
22 - Chamber of Commerce -
skylight above fifth floor
light-well.

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23 - Chamber of Commerce -
skylight and light-well.

Chamber of Commerce Building
Baltimore, Maryland
Photo and neg: Janis Rettaliata
1702 Edmondston Ave., Balt.

January 1982
Skylight and light-well

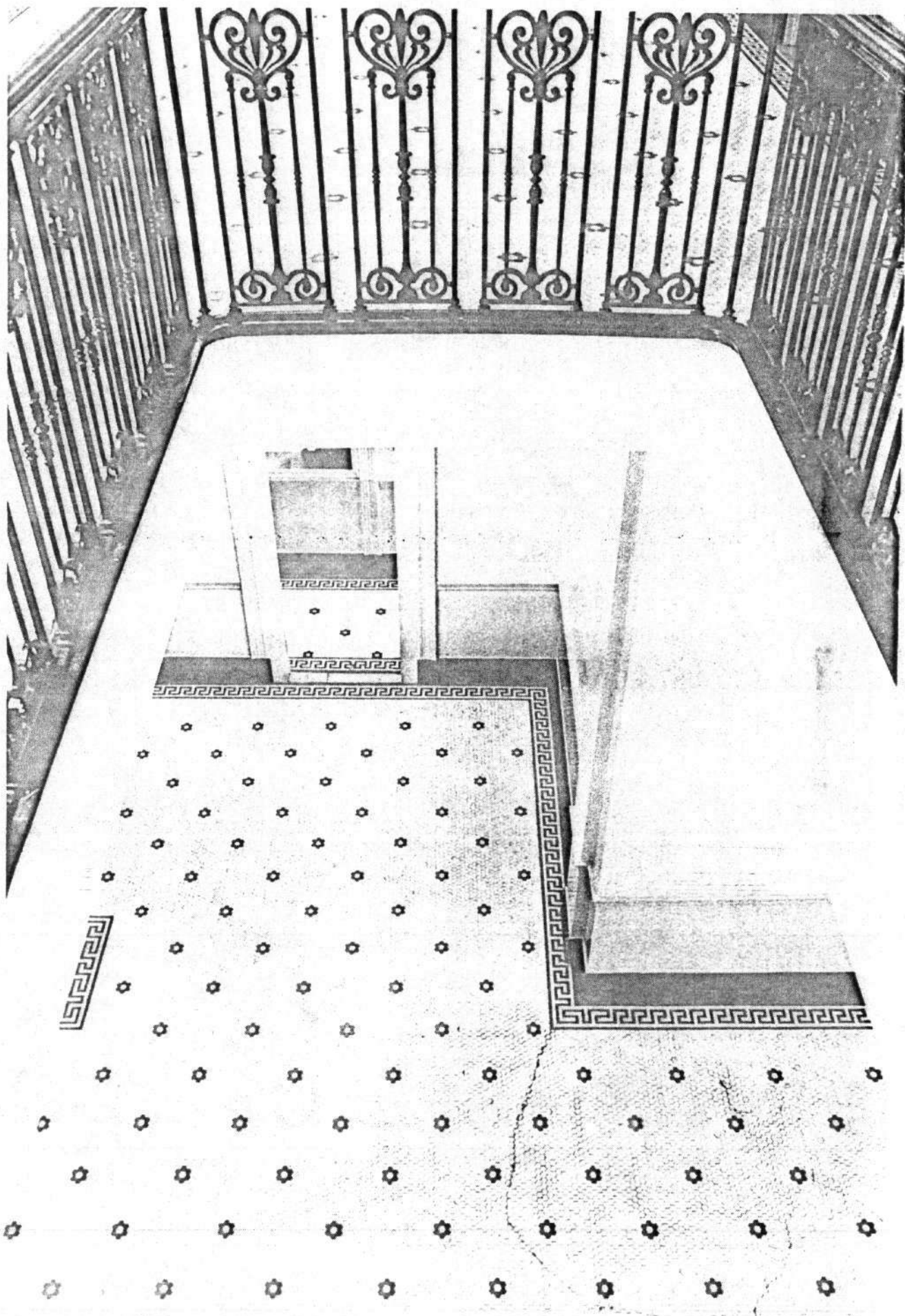
21/30

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Jan 1982
17 Commerce St
C04frr24a

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Chamber of Commerce Building
Baltimore, Maryland
Photo and neg: Janis Rettaliata
1702 Edmondston Ave., Balt.

January 1982
View down light-well to fourth floor

22/30

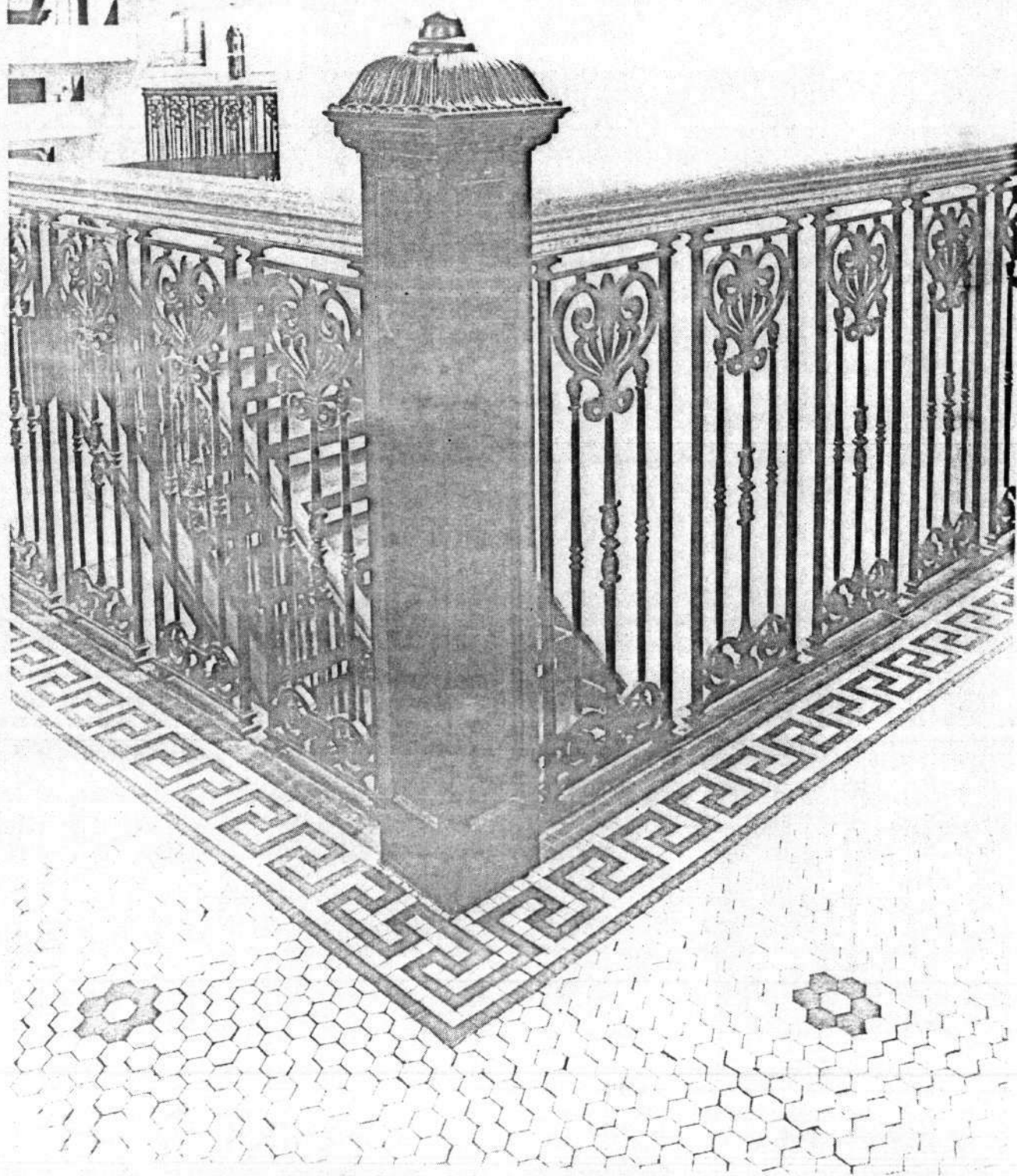
PHOTOGRAPH BY:
Janis Rettaliata
1702 Edmondston Ave.
Baltimore, MD 21228
301 744-8614

Jan 1982
17 Commerce St
c04fr27a

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24 - Chamber of Commerce -
view down light-well to
fourth floor.

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Chamber of Commerce Building
Baltimore, Maryland

Photo and neg: Janis Rettaliata
1702 Edmondston Ave., Balt.

January 1982
Railing at north stair
23/30

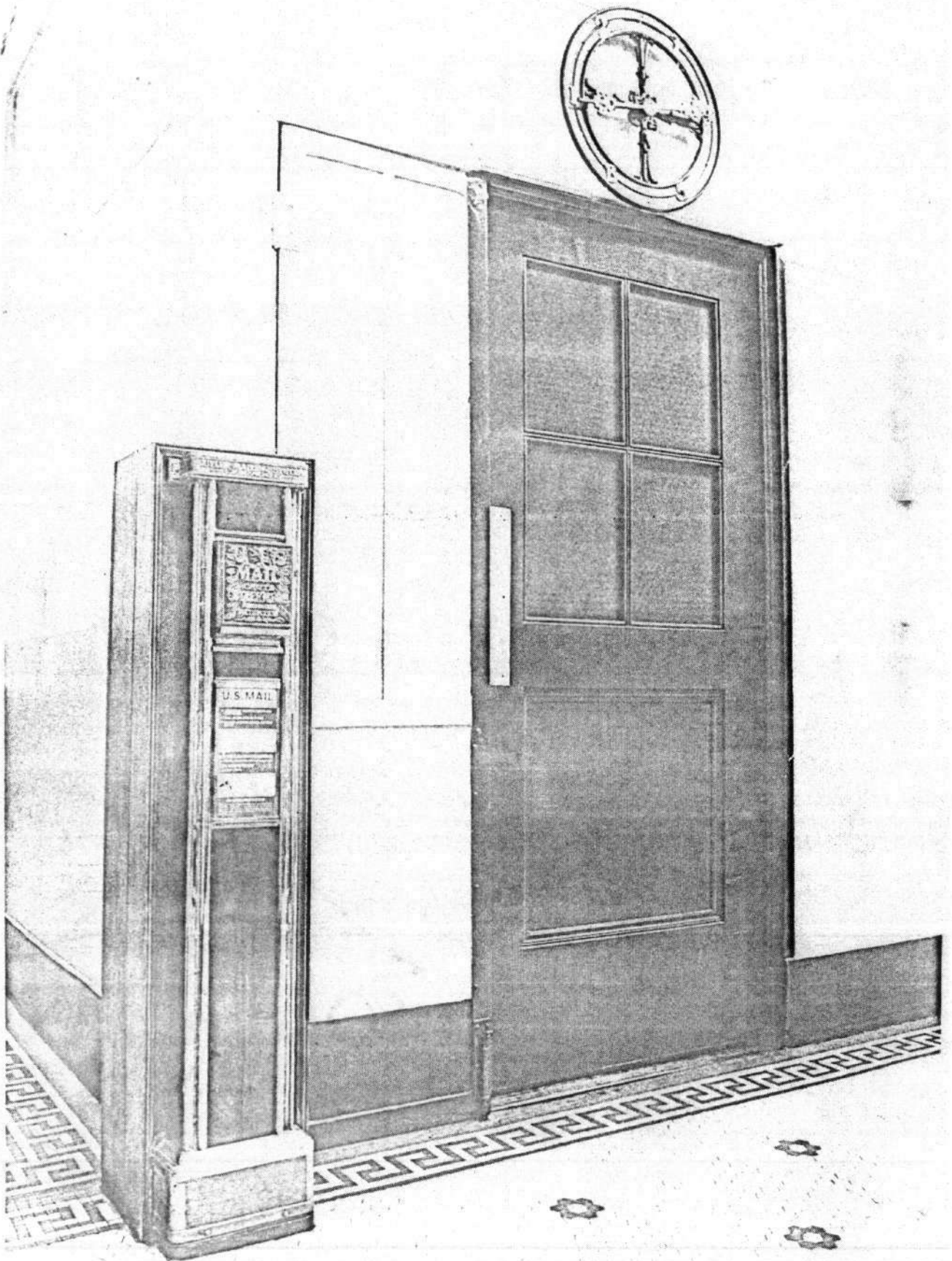
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Jan 1982
17 Commerce St
c04fr35a

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29 - Chamber of Commerce -
railing at north stair.

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Chamber of Commerce Building
Baltimore, Maryland

Photo and neg: Janis Rettaliata
1702 Edmondston Ave., Balt.

January 1982
Elevator lobby at fifty floor
24/30

02 Edmondston Ave.
Baltimore, MD 21226
301-744-8618

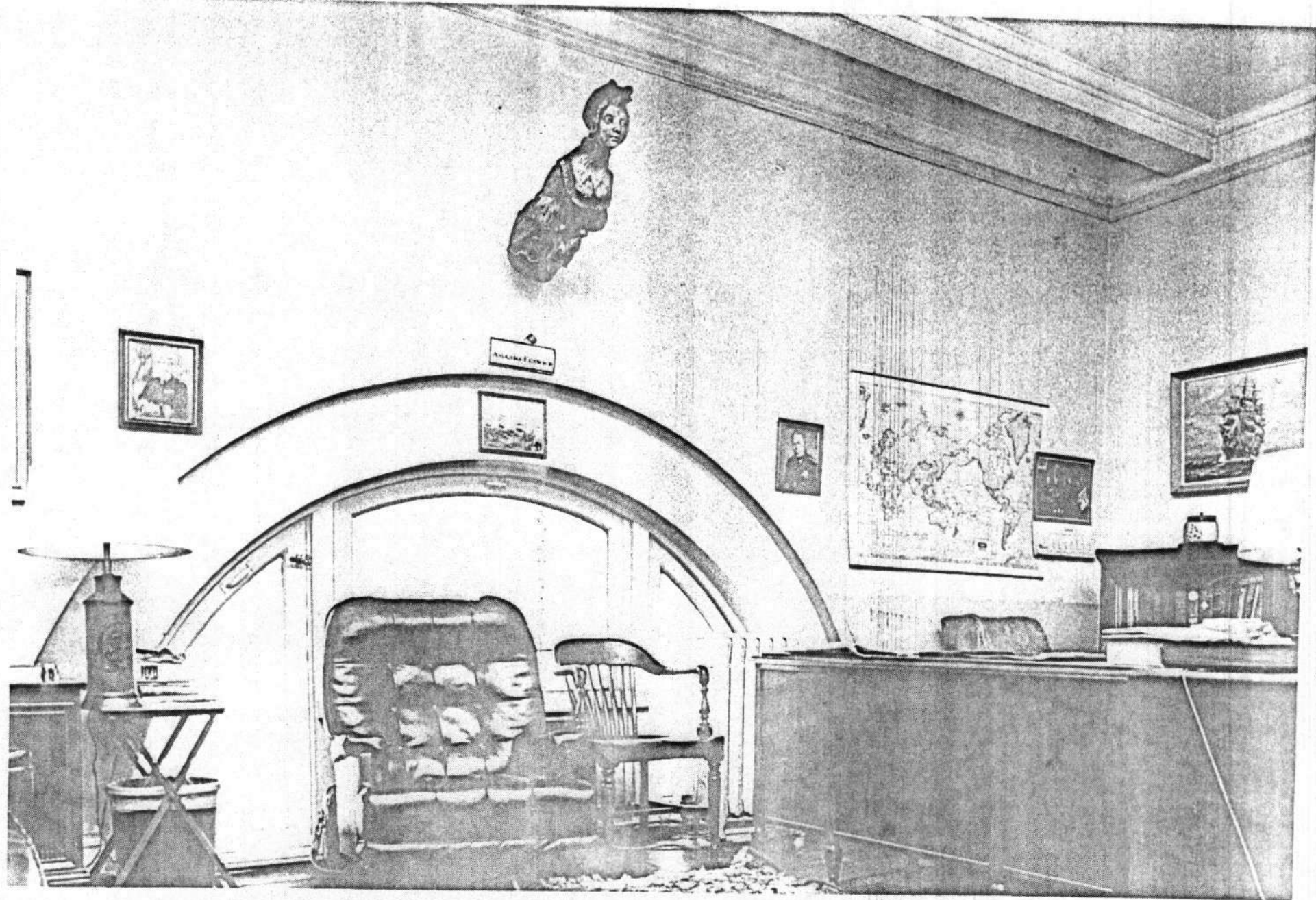
Jan 1982
17 Commerce St
e05fr11a

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26 - Chamber of Commerce -
elevator lobby at fifth
floor

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B-3706



Chamber of Commerce Building
Baltimore, Maryland
Photo and neg: Janis Rettaliata
1702 Edmonston Ave., Balt.

January 1982
Fifth floor office

25/30

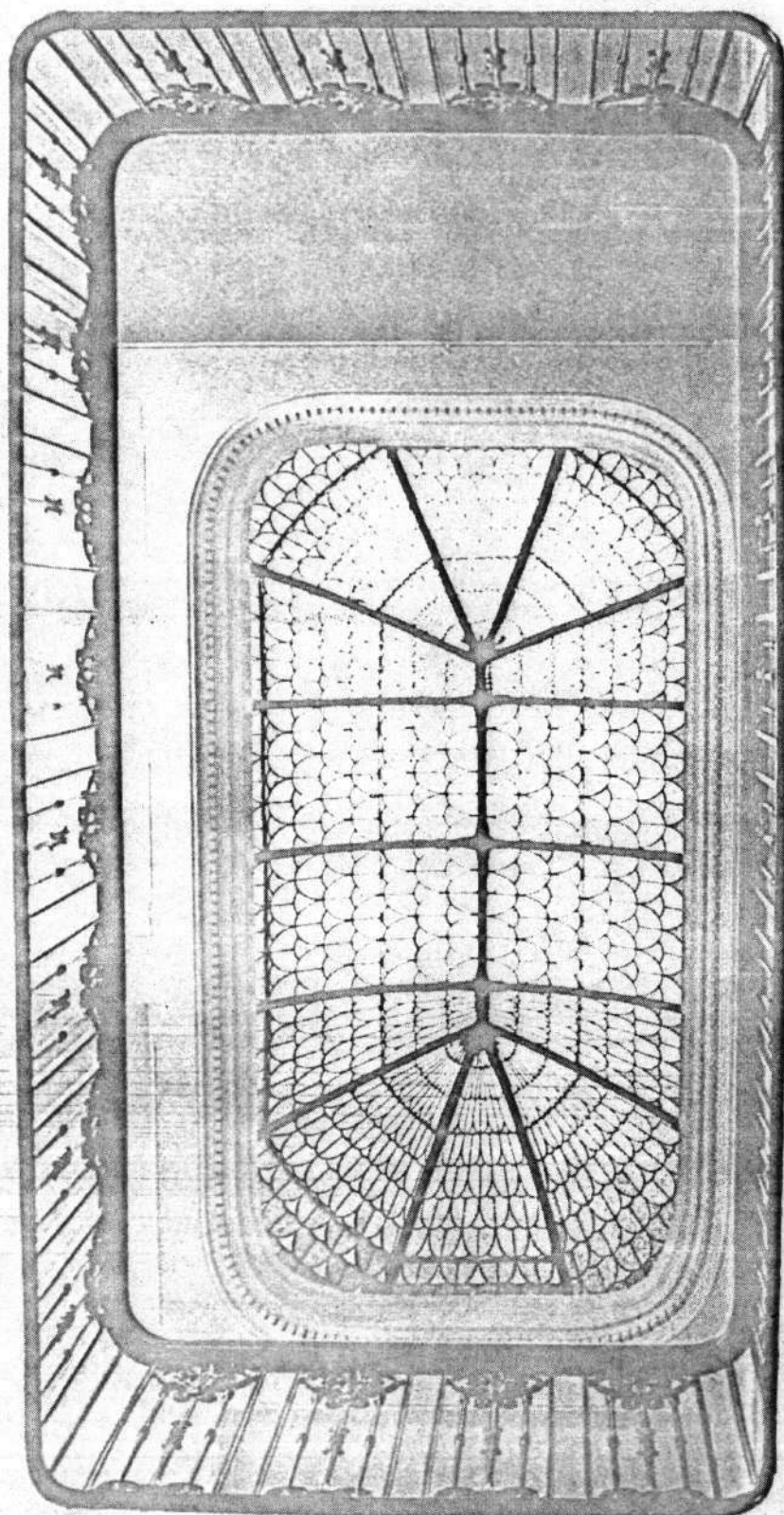
27 - Chamber of Commerce -
fifth floor office.

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Jan 1982
17 Commerce St
c05frl9a

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Chamber of Commerce Building
Baltimore, Maryland
Photo and neg: Janis Rettaliata
1702 Edmonston Ave., Balt.

January 1982
Skylight looking up through light-well
26/30

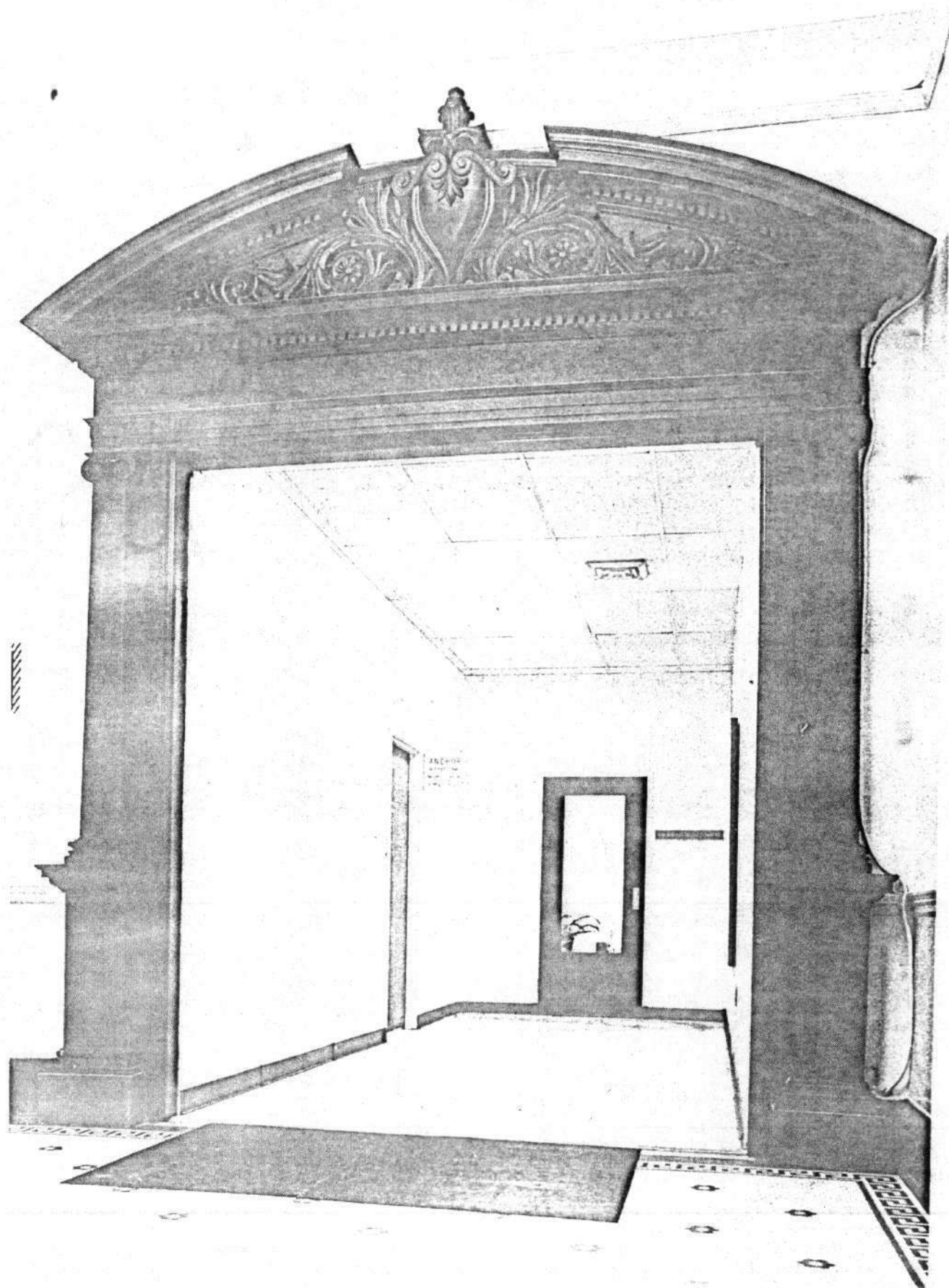
28 - Chamber of Commerce -
skylight looking up through
light-well.

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29 - Chamber of Commerce -
trading - floor entrance
on fourth floor

Chamber of Commerce Building
Baltimore, Maryland

Photo and neg: Janis Rettaliata
1702 Edmonston Ave., Balt.

January 1982

Trading - floor entrance on fourth floor

27/30

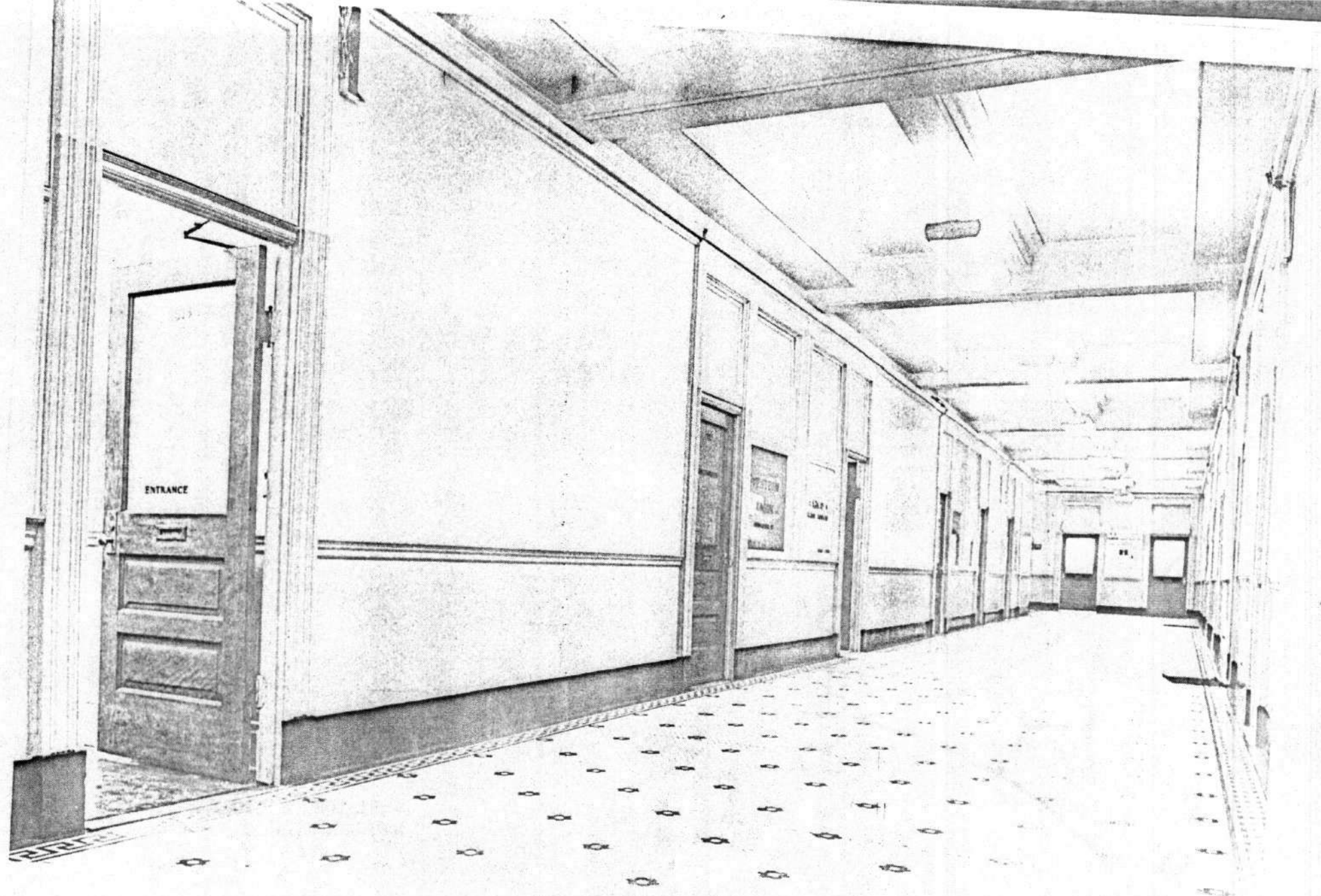
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Jan 1982
17 Commerce St
c05fr37

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Chamber of Commerce Building
Baltimore, Maryland
Photo and neg: Janis Rettaliata
1702 Edmondston Ave., Balt.
View down main corridor
28/30

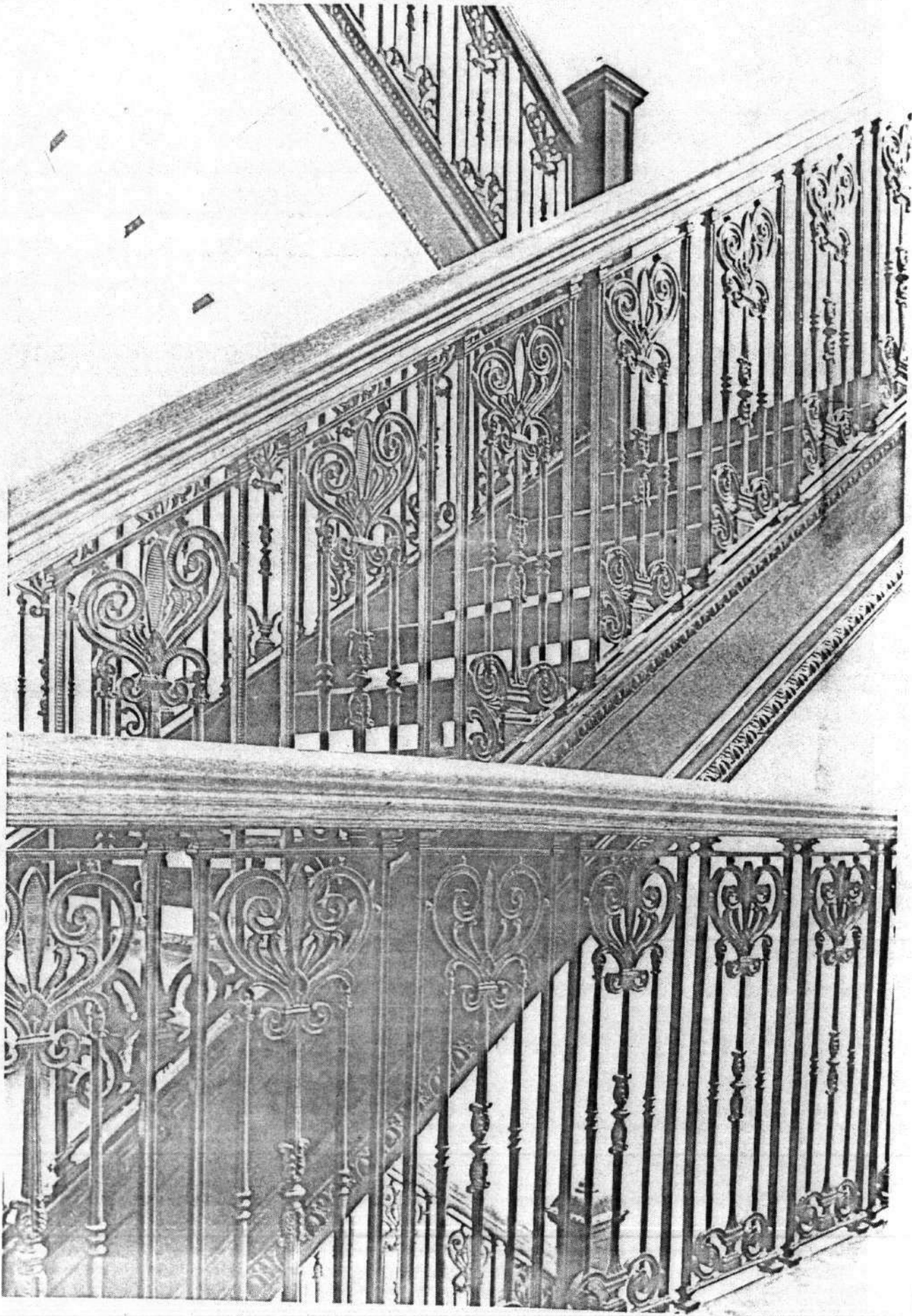
3d - Chamber of Commerce -
view down main corridor

Jan 1982
17 Commerce St
c06fr18

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Chamber of Commerce Building
Baltimore, Maryland

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Railing at north stair

January 1982

29/30

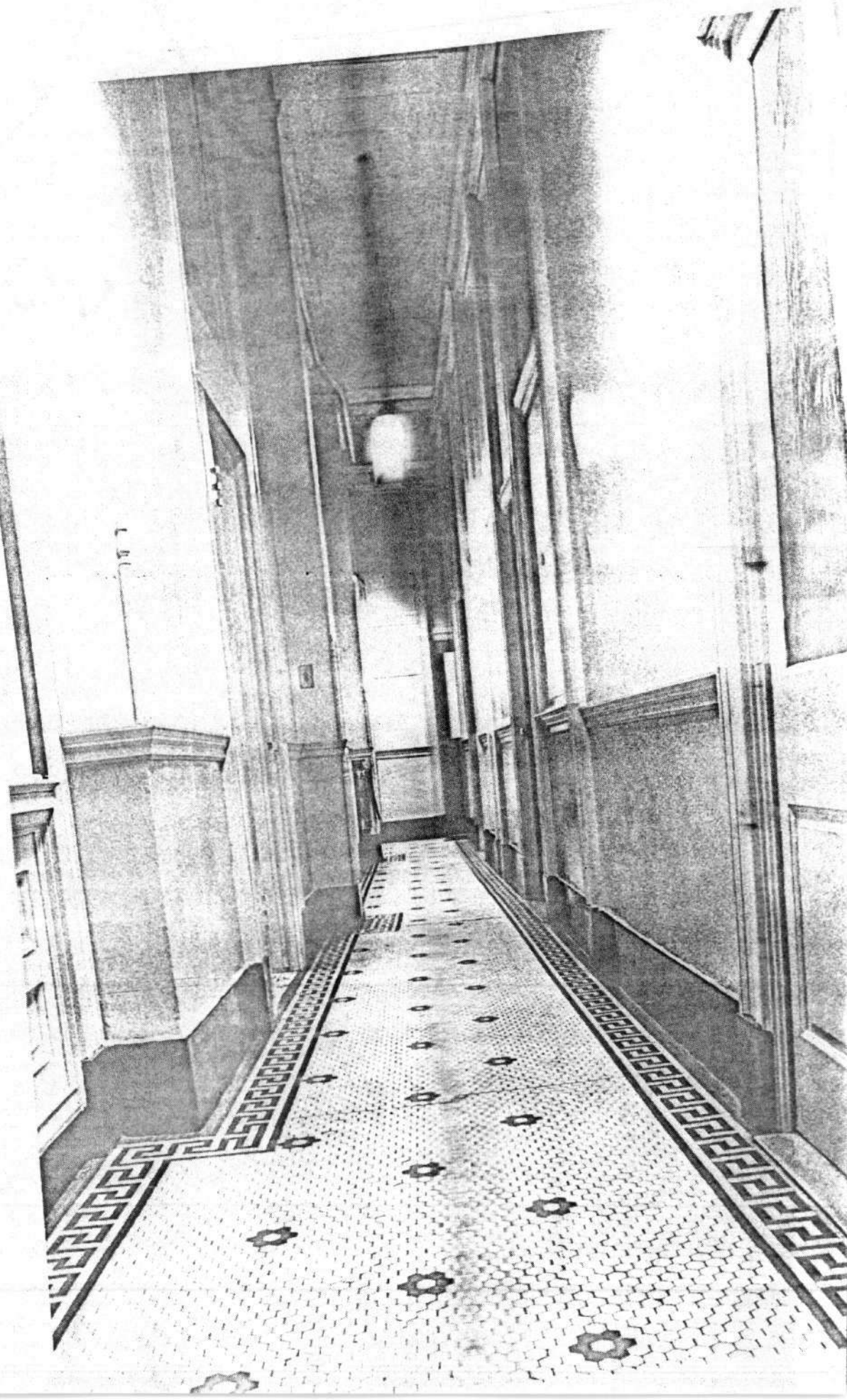
n 1982
Commerce St
6fr36

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Baltimore, MD 21228
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31 - Chamber of Commerce -
railing at north stair.

B-3706



Chamber of Commerce Building
Baltimore, Maryland
Photo and Neg: Janis Rettaliata
1702 Edmondston Ave., Balt.
View down side corridor

30/30

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Baltimore, MD 21228
301 - 744-8614

Jan 1982
17 Commerce St
c06fr07

323 - Chamber of Commerce -
View down side corridor.

B-3706

AREA: Financial District

MAGI NO.: 0437065711

Address: 400 Water Street

Current Name: Chamber of Commerce Building

Block: 1349 Lot: 3

Lot size:

Height: 5 stories

Materials: Brick and stone

Condition: Excellent

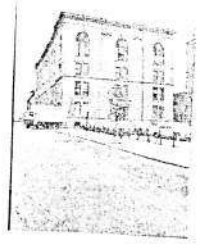
Owner: Fidelity & Guarantee Life Ins. Co.

Use: Office

Accessible: Yes

Designation: NR

Liber/Folio: SEB 213-239



Historic Name: Chamber of Commerce Building

Date: 1904

Architect/Builder: Charles E. Cassell/J.J. Walsh

Style (if appropriate):

Description:

This tan brick building with stone trim is five stories high and three bays wide along the Water Street front. The side Commerce Street elevation is eleven bays wide. Above a granite water table and high basement level, are rusticated brick walls on the first and second floors. The central entrance section is recessed and features a highly ornate entrance area decorated by fluted Ionic columns with straps, similar pilasters, and a large entablature with dentils and intricate moldings. The coupled one over one wood windows on the first and second floors have stone sills and splayed stone lintels with emphasized keystones. A band course of bead and reel and egg and dart molding caps the first and second floors. The upper floors are defined by quoins at the corners and three story high fluted Ionic pilasters. Large three part arched windows extend from the fourth through the fifth floors. Above the arches are scrolled keystones surmounted by decorative cartouches. A heavy cornice above dentils and egg and dart molding completes the facade. The side Commerce Street and Custom House Avenue elevations have similar details, but the entrances are located near the northern corners of the building.

Significance:

Area: Architecture

Level: Local

The significance of the Chamber of Commerce Building derives from its architectural character and its role in Baltimore commercial history. As a structure designed in the Renaissance Revival manner, the building displays certain distinctive features, primarily decorative, that were commonly employed during the rebuilding of the Financial District after the Baltimore Fire. These features include rustication, quoining, dentils, egg and dart molding, modillion cornices and pilasters. The building is distinctive from many other buildings in the area through its use of reddish brick, rather than stone, and the horizontal quality of the building. The building is also associated with the commercial history of Baltimore. It was constructed as a grain trading center with a trading room on the upper floor and offices for traders and exporters below.

Sources: BS 8/7/1904 p. 16 c. 3-6

(illustration and article); BS 8/14/1904 p. 15 c. 2 (permit issued); Maryland Institute Scrapbook.

Surveyor and Date: Fred B. Shoken, April 1985.

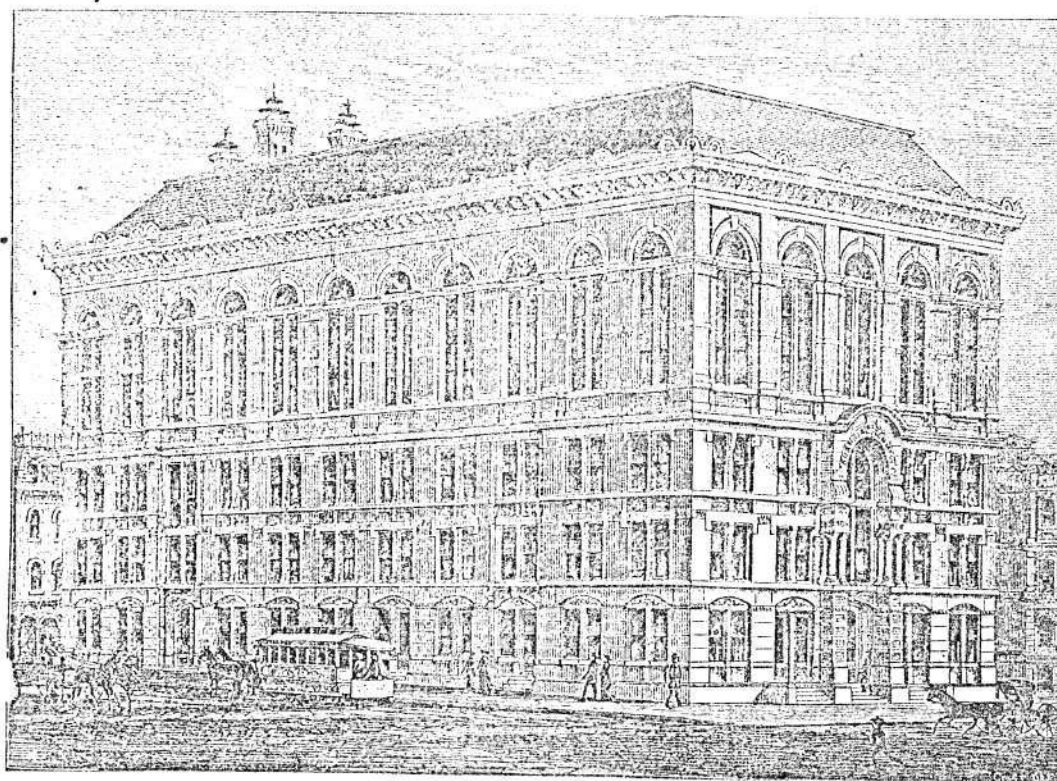
Baltimore Financial District Survey
 Chamber of Commerce Building
 400 Water Street

The old Chamber of Commerce Building which stood on this site before the Baltimore Fire, from The Monumental City p. 967.

Chamber of Commerce Building Co.

(PAGE 802.)

PRESIDENT, WALTER B. MCATEE. TREASURER, J. OLNEY NORRIS.
 SECRETARY, WILLIAM S. OSBURN.

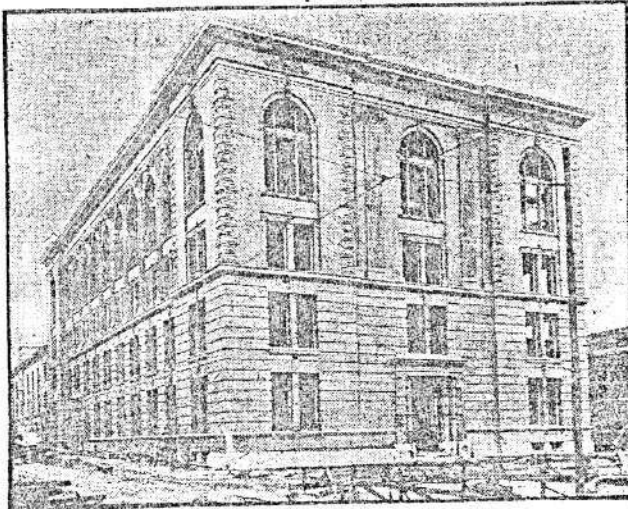


THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE BUILDING

DIRECTORS.—Walter B. McAtee, B. F. Newcomer, (pages 451 & 902), Charles D. Faber, J. Olney Norris, J. I. Middleton, Robert Tyson, William S. Young, George E. Beer, William W. McClellan.
 Builder and Superintendent, John E. Marshall, (page 802.)

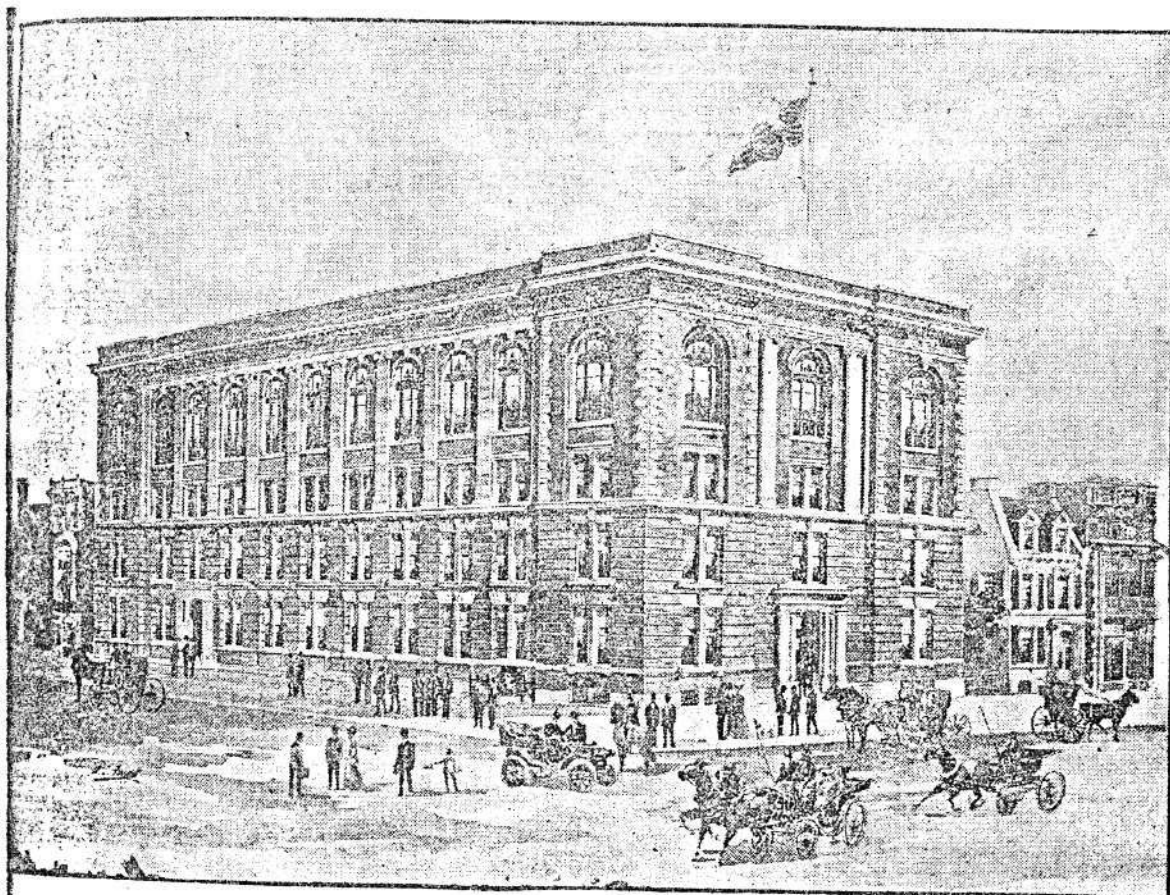
Top: photograph from Maryland Institute Scrapbook
Bottom: illustration from Baltimore Sun November 6, 1904 p. 9 c. 3-6

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

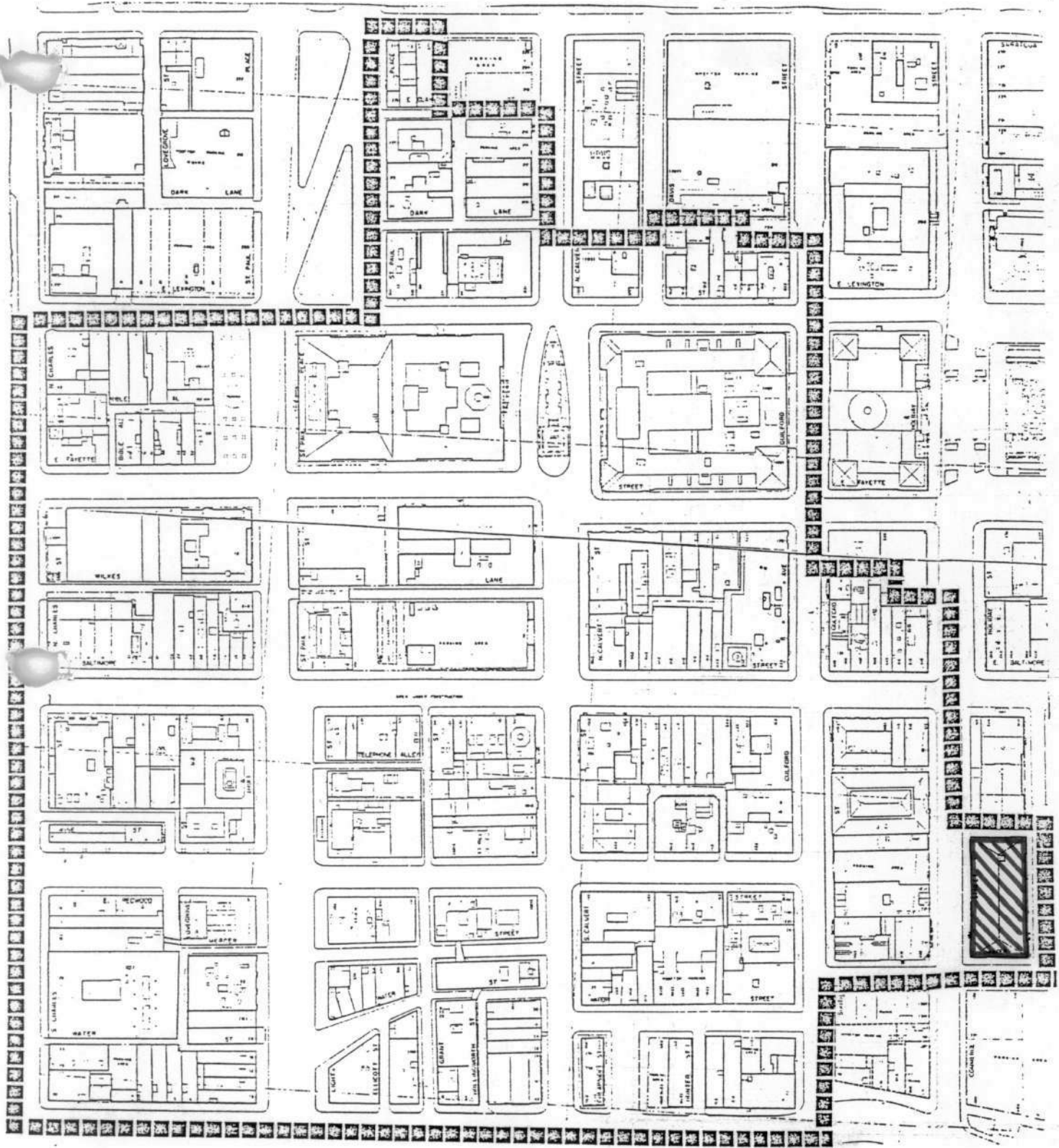


The New Home of the Grain Merchants

Work on the structure is progressing rapidly and it will likely be ready for occupancy before the fall.



THE NEW CHAMBER OF COMMERCE BUILDING



Baltimore Financial District Survey
 Baltimore (City), Maryland



B-3706

Chamber of Commerce Building
 400 Water Street



B-3706

Chamber of Commerce Building

400 Water St & 17 Commerce St.

Baltimore

View of South (front) and
side (west) facades

11/1984

Negatives @ MHT

Catherine A. Masek



B-3706

Chamber of Commerce Building
400 Water St. & 17 Commerce St.,
Baltimore

View of south (front) and
east (side) facades

Catherine A. Masek
11/1984

Negatives @ MIT



B-3706

Chamber of Commerce
Building

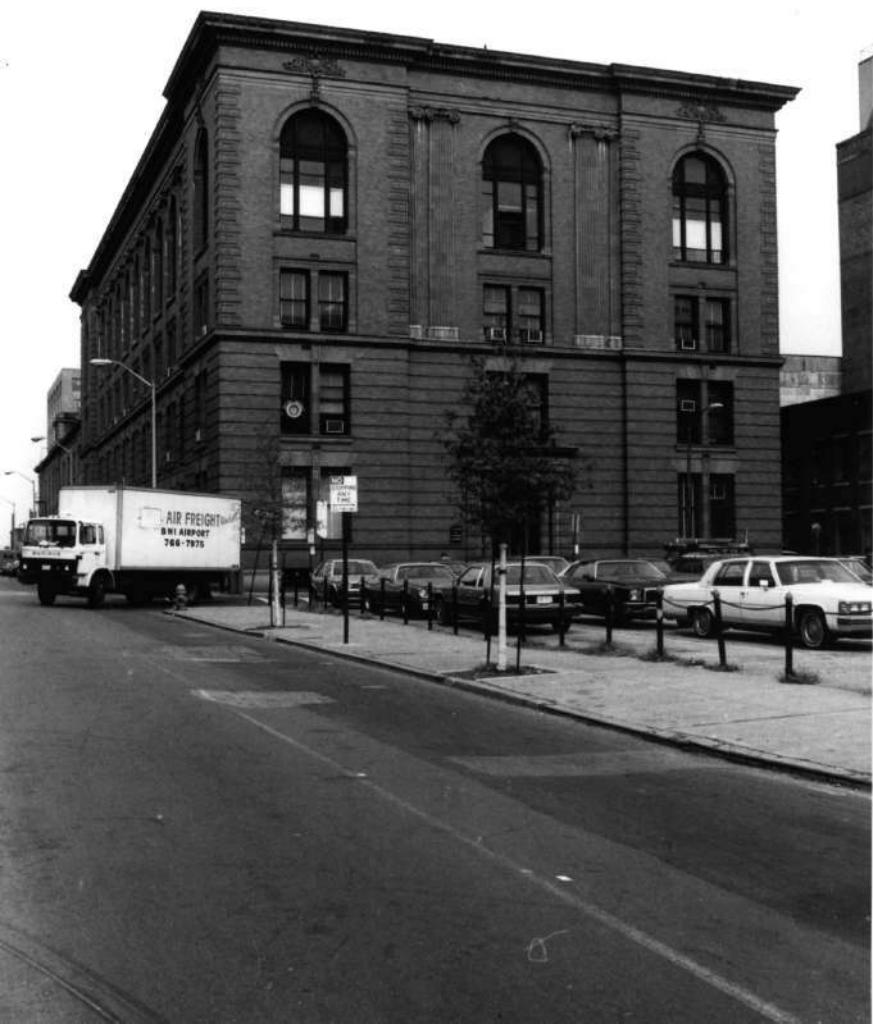
400 Water St. & 17 Commerce St.
Baltimore

Detail of side (west) facade
windows

11/1984

Catherine A Masek

Negatives @ MHT



B-3706

Chamber of Commerce Building
400 Water Street
Financial District-Metrocenter Survey
Baltimore (City), Maryland
Photo: Fred Shoken
Date: October 1983
Neg.loc.: Maryland Historical Trust
Southwest corner view